

# Encounter



*Education in Missions*



Bring the Message ... to the Harvest!

**BRIDGE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

# Bridge Student Handbook

Revised December 2019



Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young,  
but set an example for the believers in speech,  
in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

I Timothy 4:12

# Bridge Student Handbook

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**Note:** The terms Bridge Students and Interns are used interchangeably to refer to the same group.

# Welcome to Encounter

## Section 1



*On a warm, Mediterranean night the disciples eat their evening meal when quietly Jesus slips away from the table to wrap a towel around his waist. He loosens the sandal straps on the dusty feet of his followers and begins to gently wash the dirt and mud from their skin. When finished, he speaks these words.*

*“Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:12-14, NIV)*

The staff, volunteers, and interns that make ENCOUNTER possible are not employees. They are family, a part of the body of Christ serving together, a team who passionately desires to see people experience a genuine, maturing walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are a group of servant leaders who believe in creating effective learning experiences that lead to an understanding of God’s creation, knowledge about the ever-unfolding story of humanity, and proficient communication skills.

We are convinced that learning and growing happens best in the context of loving, respectful relationships and strive to bring the peace, joy, and love of Christ into the Encounter experience.

We are committed to nurturing our own relationships with Christ continually growing in our trust, love, understanding, and obedience, knowing that as we abide in Him, He bears fruit through us.

We are dedicated to the belief that all people are God’s image bearers with passions, abilities and potential which should be encouraged, nurtured, and applied for the Glory of God and the furtherance of his redemptive work.

So come and join us.

If you are a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, willing to do what is needed, humble enough to serve without personal gain, and teachable enough to listen, learn, and grow, there is a place for you at ENCOUNTER.



# What is Encounter All About?

## Section 2

### *The Mission*

**Connecting** people to Christ,

**Promoting** education, and

**Supporting** workers in the harvest.

### *The Vision*

ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS LEARNING CENTERS will stretch around the world creating opportunities for Christ-centered education which leads to...

**Making** disciples of all nations

**Supporting** cross-cultural missionaries

**Encouraging** skill acquisition, cognitive development, and critical thinking in children and youth.



## *The Philosophy*

**ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS is founded on the belief that Christian education is...**

- An effective platform for teaching people who God is and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ
- A means of helping cross-cultural missionaries serve and thrive in needy areas around the world
- A key to breaking the chains of generational poverty and building a dynamic, healthy local church



### *Key Verse*

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” – **Matthew 9:37-38**

### *Non-Discrimination Statement*

**ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS** does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, or disability.

## *Core Values*

### **We show love and respect for others by...**

- Sharing the truth in love
- Choosing kind, considerate words and actions which will bless others
- Keeping appropriate physical boundaries
- Avoiding gossip, boasting, and slander
- Actively listening and seeking to understand others
- Practicing forgiveness in our relationships
- Choosing to see current strengths and future potential in others
- Submitting to authority as unto the Lord

### **We demonstrate godly character in ourselves by...**

- Committing to personal growth and Christian maturity
- Praying continually through ups and downs
- Working diligently at the tasks assigned to us
- Choosing faith and optimism in the face of challenges
- Sacrificing our time, comfort and convenience for the benefit of others
- Not thinking of ourselves as above others
- Being willing to do any job to the best of our ability
- Refusing to harbor bitterness or hold grudges in our heart
- Exercising patience in the face of setbacks and delays
- Showing perseverance in tasks and relationships
- Possessing a teachable spirit that responds well to correction
- Cultivating an ever-deepening, trusting, dependent relationship with the Father

# Encounter's Statement of Faith

## Section 3

*We believe* the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

*We believe* that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*We believe* in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

*We believe* that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

*We believe* in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

*We believe* in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

*We believe* in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

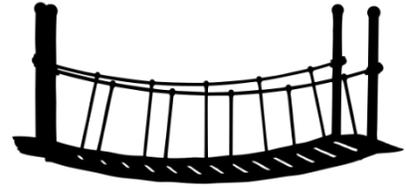
*As adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals*

# Introducing Bridge

## Section 4

BRIDGE exists to open the doors for young adults (ages 16-25) to assist missionaries now, while also preparing and mobilizing the next generation of goers and senders for the future. Whether God leads these young people to pursue a career in overseas missionary work or stay home, ENCOUNTER believes early discipleship plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the next generation. These goals are accomplished in the Bridge Program through part-time ministry internships, academic studies, Christian community living, and on campus discipleship classes.

The Bridge Program is designed for a minimum one-year time commitment starting in July and ending in June, but students may continue in the program for multiple years. Students only able to participate for one semester will be considered on a case by case basis, but priority will be given to students able to commit for a year. Bridge Students must speak English fluently.



Students live on the ministry campus along with assigned dorm parents. The Encounter personnel assist students in preparation, ensure to their well-being while in country, and serve as loving mentors.

Each Bridge Student is enrolled in academic classes with at least a half time course load. These classes may be through ENCOUNTER ACADEMY if still completing high school credits or through an institution of higher learning. The Bridge schedule includes time to work on classes in the Study Zone with the assistance of Staff Members. Support, mentoring, and accountability is also provided to realize each student's goal of successfully completing coursework.

A network of ministry partnerships with BRIDGE, allows students to choose from a variety of internship positions in which to serve. Students commit to internship positions for one semester at a time and receive training in good employee practices through ENCOUNTER. ENCOUNTER also plays the role of mediating between conflicts which may arise between Interns and Missionaries. ENCOUNTER is also responsible for arranging transportation to and from the ministry location for students. A portion of the Bridge Program Fee is given to the ministry with which the student is interning to help cover ministry costs and materials. It is of utmost importance that the reputation and work of local ministries is not hindered by the presence of a Bridge Student, and ENCOUNTER seeks to be a supportive productive partner for these other ministries.

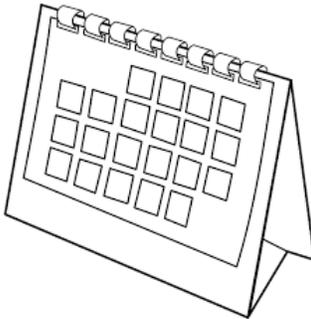
# Bridge Student Roles and Responsibilities

## Section 5

### Role and Responsibility:

- ✓ Serve cheerfully and to the best of their ability in their assigned tasks as the hands and feet of Jesus.
- ✓ Report promptly to scheduled classes, Study Zone time, internship hours, and other events.
- ✓ Follow the various expectations given by coordinators, dorm parents, supervisors, and teachers with a good attitude.
- ✓ Live and serve in agreement with the Encounter “Statement of Faith” and “Encounter Leadership Expectations”

### Time Commitment:

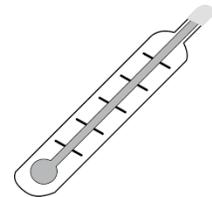


**Duration:** Bridge Students sign a commitment form at orientation in July agreeing to remain in the program from July until the following June (11 months). Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Bridge Coordinator and an Administrator. Bridge Students may continue in the program for multiple years.

**Time Off:** Should a Bridge Student need to take time off for a special event, the individual must complete the “Time Off Request Form” (See Appendix) at least two weeks before the requested absence. If the absence is approved, the individual requesting the absence will be responsible for making arrangements for others to cover his or her responsibilities while away. Emergency and unexpected situations will be handled by the leadership on a case by case basis.

### Illness & Appointments:

Bridge Students experiencing illness remain in a Rest & Recovery Room and receive care for the day. Should time off be required for an appointment, the “Absence for Appointment Request Form” (See Appendix) should be filled out and submitted to the office as soon as the appointment is scheduled.



# Bridge Community Life

## Section 6

We hold to the expectation that those coming to ENCOUNTER are truly interested in serving, learning, and growing and are willing to go above and beyond when called upon. The Bridge Schedule and Calendar seeks to provide students with a balance of study, work, travel, worship, and fellowship.

### Weekly Activities

**RR Meetings:** On Tuesday through Friday morning, Staff, Volunteers, and Interns meet for 30 minutes at the beginning of the day to engage in book discussions, learn through video series, talk about upcoming activities, and pray together.



**Study Zone Hours:** All Bridge Students are enrolled in at least 6 college courses or approximately 15-20 hours of total study time each week. Students may enroll in more. The Study Zone is a comfortable, quiet area created for independent study with ongoing support from Staff and Volunteers. Designated Study Zone hours have been placed in the schedule. Most students will also have to devote time in the evening and/or on weekends to assignments as well.

**Internship Hours:** All Bridge Students serve 12-24 hours a week as Interns directly with one of Encounter's ministries or with another organization in the local area. Internship hours will be arranged taking the students course load into consideration. Included in the Program Fee is transportation to and from each student's place of internship.

**Biblical Worldview Class:** Each year, Bridge Students learn what it means to develop and apply a Biblical Worldview in these weekly group classes.

**Awana:** Every Friday, Bridge Students set 90-minutes aside to serve as teachers, game leaders, speakers, musicians, and assistants in a Bible Club for Children and Youth called Awana.

**Church Attendance:** Bridge Students are expected to attend the church of their choice in the local area each week.

## Special Events

**Arrival & Departure:** There is a designated Arrival Window in July and a Departure Window in June as well as a location given on the Bridge Calendar. Transportation from the airport will be arranged for Bridge Students during the Arrival Window and Departure Window. The cost of any personal “special trips” is covered by the student and he or she is responsible for all travel arrangements.

**Orientation:** Orientation is held twice a year to familiarize students with upcoming activities, expectations, and other important information.

**Back to School Retreat:** Bridge students participate and assist with this short camp intended to prepare Encounter Academy Students for the upcoming school year.

**Bridge Trek Trips:** The Bridge Program Fee includes three Bridge Trek Trips to various parts of the country for sightseeing, education, and recreation. These trips are taken as a group with Staff Members, and participation on these trips is required.

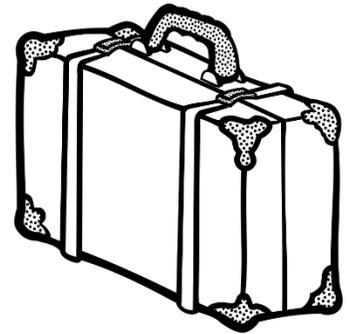
**Community Days:** There are four Community Days each year. These events bring Bridge Students, Encounter Academy students and families, and other missionaries together for fun, fellowship, and learning. All Bridge Students participate and serve at these events.

**Encounter Servicing Weeks:** Eight weeks of the year are designated as Servicing Weeks. During these weeks, Staff, Volunteers, and Interns spend additional time learning together how to mature and develop as a missionary and disciple of Jesus Christ. The remainder of the time is devoted to completing the tasks necessary for the coming months at Encounter. Students are also given time to study during this week.

**Language Classes:** Whether Bridge Students come to the field with no knowledge of the local language or a high degree of fluency, time is spent increasing understanding and vocabulary in these classes.



**Christmas Break:** There is a two-week break over the Christmas/New Year Holidays in the calendar. This is the only break during which the Bridge Dorm House is closed. Bridge students may either choose to return home for the break or stay with a local family. The Bridge Coordinator can assist students with finding a family to stay with. Transportation costs related to Christmas break are not included in the Program Fee and are the responsibility of the Student.



## Time Off and Independent Travel

When not in a designated activity, Bridge Students can catch up on assignments, relax, rest, or explore the surrounding area and beyond. All students sign out when leaving the ministry property and must stay in well-lit, non-isolated areas when traveling out.

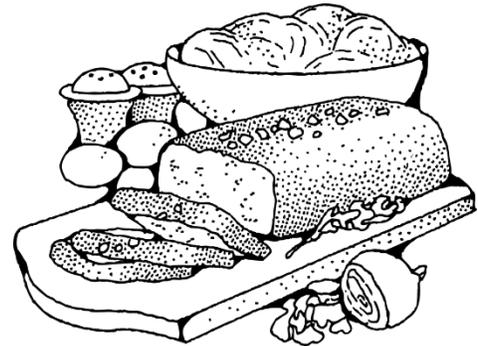


Students must be back in the Dorm House by 10 PM each night unless permission has been requested and granted to spend the night in another location. Students must carry a charged, active cell phone with them at all times when off campus. Students under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a travel buddy 18 or older when leaving the ministry property.

## Room & Board

**Housing:** Upon arrival, Bridge Students are assigned a room to share with other students of the same gender. At no time should a student enter a dorm room assigned to the opposite gender. Bridge Dorm Houses are overseen by House Parents. They are secure buildings with appropriate safety precautions and considerations in place. Students are assigned responsibilities to help care for the facilities. The Bridge Program Fee covers all housing and utilities for the duration of the program. Personal toiletries, towels, and bedding are included in the packing list provided in *Preparing for Bridge*.

**Dining:** The Bridge Program Fee includes three meals a day as well as snacks during the work week. Bridge Students take turns assisting with food preparation. It is recommended that students bring additional spending money for extra snacks and occasional meals out as may be desired during the course of the year.



**Note:** If a student has special dietary considerations please indicate so on the Health section of the application form. The Bridge Coordinator will work with students to make a suitable plan. A student may need to bring foods from the home country or bring additional funds if supplemental items are significantly more expensive than what is provided in the general menu.

## Community Life Guidelines

**Interpersonal Physical Boundaries:** Bridge Students must respect physical boundaries between themselves and others at all times. Physical contact with any other person should be limited to brief side hugs, a comforting hand on the shoulder, and customary social gestures. Apart from these acts, Bridge Students will not physically be in contact with others and space will be present between all bodies. Students should never be in a non-visible, secluded location with a minor or someone of the opposite sex. Married Bridge Students may show physical affection with their spouse in a way that is tasteful and not offensive to others.

**Dress Code:** Those studying and serving with ENCOUNTER follow a general dress code which applies during all activities on and off ENCOUNTER property regardless of gender. Students appearing out of dress code will be asked to change.

- Clothing should touch the top of the knees when standing and cover all the way up to the waist without slits or holes. Tops should fully cover the chest and include straps or sleeves over the shoulders. At no time should undergarments be visible, or any clothing be worn which contains vulgarity or an offense to the Christian faith.



- If specific clothing is required for an internship position, the Bridge Student will be informed after placement.
- While in the privacy of a student's own dorm room and while swimming, this dress code is not applicable, but students are asked to use modesty and discretion.
- Encounter has no specific regulations concerning piercings, tattoos, hair coloring, or hair styles.

**Risky Behaviors:** Because Bridge Students are serving and living in an overseas country with varying standards of safety, certain risky behaviors are prohibited. Students may not get additional tattoos or piercings while in the program. Recreational activities such as skydiving, bungee jumping, and hang gliding are not allowed. Drunkenness is never tolerated, and students under the age of 21 may not consume alcohol. Alcohol may not be brought onto Encounter property. Smoking and vaping are not allowed while in the Bridge Program. Using drugs other than for medical purposes is prohibited. Students may not hang out in establishments where drunkenness and drug activity is taking place.

**Discipline:** The goal of all discipline at ENCOUNTER is self-discipline. When problems arise and attitudes become detrimental, it is an opportunity to learn and grow and mature. At ENCOUNTER, we seek to lead students down the path to self-discipline through mentoring, counseling, encouragement, admonishment, natural consequences, and given consequences.

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*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

*Hebrews 12:11*

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Encounter Staff and Volunteers may give Bridge Students Community Service (additional work assignments to be completed during free time) if necessary. In extreme cases unaltered rebellious behavior will result in suspension for a certain period of time or for the remainder of the program. Suspended students must return home or make alternative housing arrangements at their own expense for the time of the suspension. Suspension will never be used until other attempts have been made to encourage a student to alter their behavior.

## Family Connections

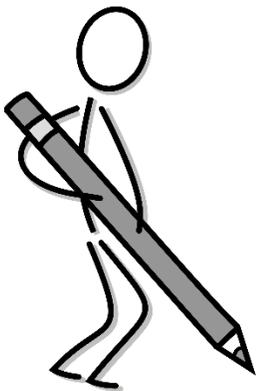
Bridge Students are highly encouraged to stay connected to friends and family back home throughout the year. They may return home for visits during breaks. All students must be in possession of a cell phone with which they will easily be able to communicate at a free low rate. Family members are also welcome to visit Bridge Students during the year and the Bridge Coordinator can provide recommendations for lodging in the area.



Family members such as a spouse or children may accompany a Bridge student. Contact the Bridge Coordinator to see what special arrangements can be made for these situations.

The Bridge Program runs from July to the following June (11 months) Bridge Students are not permitted to get married during this time commitment.

# Notes



# Finances & Resources

## Section 7

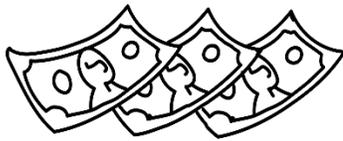
### Financial Responsibilities

Bridge Students are expected to raise or provide the funds necessary for the Bridge Program Fee (\$4,800) which must be paid in full by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Students will also need to bring additional funds for personal spending money. Students may incur expenses related to their coursework with an outside school or institution which are paid directly to the institution by the student.

ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS does not seek to make a profit on any of its activities. The ministry does aim to cover expenses while keeping costs as low as possible for all who wish to be involved. No one at ENCOUNTER draws a salary for their services.

### Financial Support

We highly encourage Bridge Students to build a team of ministry partners who invest in the individual's year of study and ministry work through financial donations.



**How Much Should I Raise?** While the Program Fee is \$4,800 and covers basic expenses, Bridge Students should consider other financial needs such as the cost of the airfare to and from the ministry location, spending money in country for toiletries and other items, passport and visa costs, tuition, textbooks, and other supplies.

**Who Can Process My Funds?** Typically, finances are raised through a partnering organization in the host country that processes contributions and deposits those funds monthly into a bank account. These organizations retain a percentage of contributions to cover their operating expenses. *Preparing for Bridge* provides contact information for several different organizations that can process a Bridge Student's finances, and ENCOUNTER will provide an acceptance letter and any other assistance needed in setting up this account.

**How do I access funds overseas?** While Bridge Students may bring a limited amount of cash with them and exchange it in country, we suggest that the majority of their funds be accessible with a debit card. Having a backup card and account in case one is temporarily malfunctioning is also a good idea. One debit card is great and two is better!

**Do I Need a Ministry Team?** All accepted applicants, whether or not they are asking others to support them or using another financial source, are required to complete the “Ministry Team Building Assignments” included in *Preparing for Bridge*. These assignments help Bridge Students build a biblical understanding of missions, fundraising, and the importance of the body of Christ as a support network for missionaries.

All Bridge Students, whether or not they are requesting financial support from individuals, build a team of at least ten individuals or couples to serve as the student’s ministry team. These team members commit to staying informed about the ministry by reading the Bridge Student’s updates, praying for the student, and sending their own prayer requests to the student.



*Bridge Students are not permitted to directly ask another Encounter Staff, Volunteer, Intern or Community Member for financial support.*

### **Emergency Fund:**

All Bridge Students must have available to them during the program a \$300 emergency fund. These funds may be on a debit card or a line of credit on a credit card. We do not suggest bringing these funds in cash.

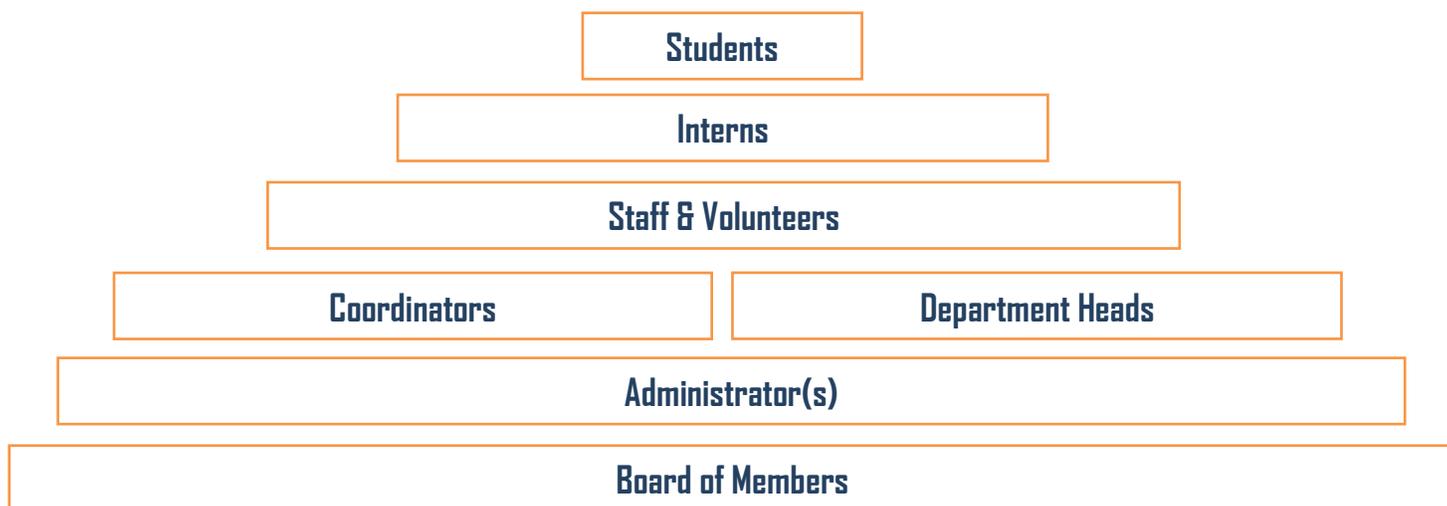
### **Packing List:**

After acceptance, incoming Bridge Students are provided a detailed packing list in *Preparing for Bridge*.



# Organizational Chart

## Section 8



### The Inverted Leadership Pyramid

The **ENCOUNTER Organizational Chart** is based on the conviction that Jesus called leaders to be servants rather than to enjoy benefits of hierarchy. Therefore, the members of the Encounter Community with the heaviest loads of responsibility are at the bottom, indicating that their task is to carry out their duties sacrificially for the benefit of those they support.

**BOARDS OF MEMBERS** is the foundational body of leadership given the task of appointing and supporting Administrators and setting vision and direction for the future. Board Members may also serve in a dual capacity as Administrators, Coordinators, Staff Members or Volunteers. Board Members may not receive financial compensation for their services.

**ADMINISTRATORS(S)** are one to three persons appointed to the task of overseeing and carrying out the day to day operations of ENCOUNTER. They support Coordinators, Department Head, Staff, Volunteers, & Students by providing mentorship, direction, encouragement, and correction. Their sacrificial love and care for the Encounter community lays the foundation for a warm and accepting atmosphere. Despite their

heavy responsibility, there is no task too lowly for an Administrator, and an Administrator should never ask a Coordinator, Department Head, Staff, Volunteer, Intern, or Student to do a task they would be unwilling to undertake themselves. Administrators serve as members of the board and may also serve in dual capacity in another position(s) on the organizational chart. Administrators may not receive financial compensation for their services.

**COORDINATORS & DEPARTMENT HEADS** see to the management of the various ministries and departments of ENCOUNTER. Like administrators they support Staff Members, Volunteers, and Interns through mentorship, direction, encouragement, and correction and are also key players in setting a welcoming, Christ-focused atmosphere at ENCOUNTER. Coordinators and Department Heads may also serve in a dual capacity as staff in other ministry departments. Coordinators and Department Heads may not receive financial compensation for their services.

**STAFF MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS** serve Interns, Students, and others benefiting from the ministry of ENCOUNTER by carrying out the tasks of each ministry department to the glory of God. At times Staff and Volunteers are appointed to lead a committee, project, or event. Other Staff, Volunteers, Interns, Coordinators, Department Heads and Administrators should follow the leadership of the appointed Staff Member in the activities relating to that appointment. Staff and Volunteers may also serve in a dual capacity in another position(s) on the organizational chart. Staff Members and Volunteers may not receive financial compensation for their services.

**INTERNS** are young adults learning while serving. They support Students and other members of the Encounter Community by using their skills and abilities to carry out the mission of the ministry. Interns may not receive financial compensation for their services.

**Supporting the Leadership of Others** – From the Board making directional decisions to the Intern assigned to oversee a school activity, members from the Encounter Community are regularly asked to step into leadership positions. We enable our fellow missionaries to lead and serve by joyfully submitting ourselves to their directives. Criticizing their performance to others, complaining about their actions, or failing to provide full-hearted cooperation, tears down Community Members and creates a hostile atmosphere. We support our co-workers through an encouraging spirit and by refraining from giving negative opinions at the inappropriate time to the inappropriate people.

*More specific job descriptions are located in the "Roles and Responsibilities" sections in the various Encounter handbooks and manuals.*

# Encounter Leadership Expectations

## Section 9

*Persons holding leadership positions* (board members, administrators, coordinators, staff, volunteers, and interns) *in Encounter: Education in Missions are held to the following expectations....*

**Core Values** – While we are all continually growing in Christian maturity, Encounter leaders commit to adhering to the Core Values of the organization, recognizing wrong attitudes and actions, and seeking reconciliation with God and man as needed. Encounter leaders should seek to promote peace, restoration, and healing in the community and avoid words and actions that breed division.

**Spiritual Growth** – Participate actively with a local, Bible-believing church. Regularly set aside time to pray, read God’s Word, and worship.

**Policies and Procedures** – Follow and abide by the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook and other ministry and department handbooks and manuals.

**Secondary Doctrines** – In the matter of secondary doctrines (views concerning baptism, communion, works of grace, gift of prophecy, gift of tongues, security of salvation, end times events, ect...) we choose to accept that a variety of views will be represented. We do not diminish the importance of those topics, but we believe it is the duty of the local church to teach secondary doctrines.

In an effort to maintain unity and focus on the primary Christian doctrines as laid out in the “Statement of Faith”, we choose to put these topics aside while at ENCOUNTER. Teachers, guest speakers, and others in leadership positions are not permitted to teach secondary doctrines or discuss their personal secondary doctrinal views while participating in an Encounter activity. Likewise, activities such as baptism, healing services, and publicly speaking in tongues, which are associated with secondary doctrines, should take place at a local church and not at ENCOUNTER.

**Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco** – Abstain from any use of drugs other than for medical purposes. Do not drink alcohol to the extent of entering into a state of drunkenness. Refrain from the use of tobacco products on the Encounter property or while participating in Encounter activities.

**Dress Code** – While on the Encounter property or participating in Encounter activities, leaders should follow the same dress code guidelines required of students. Any type of clothing is acceptable that touches the knees when standing, covers the midriff area, and fully covers the area that would be covered by a standard tank top. Clothing should never reveal undergarments or any parts of the body considered to be “private” while the person is in any position.

**Punctuality** – Out of respect for the community, for the sake of efficiency, and to set a good example for students, leaders arrive to activities in a timely manner.

**Sexual Purity** – ENCOUNTER holds to the Word of God as the authoritative source governing right and wrong. Actively engaging in any sexual sins as defined by God’s Word is prohibited. This includes viewing pornography, sexting, or sexual relations towards any person outside of the covenant of a marriage between a male and female. To avoid the appearance of evil and ensure proper boundaries are maintained, prolonged physical contact or any contact involving intimate areas with others is not tolerated between unmarried persons. Married couples should also exercise discretion when in public.

**Legal Adherence** – Respect the local and national laws both inside and outside of Encounter activities. Show respect and cooperation with governing authorities.

**Flexibility** – Organization and preparation are important characteristics of Encounter activities, but things do not always play out as planned in ministry. Leaders are asked to maintain an attitude of flexibility, recognize that God is ultimately sovereign over all circumstances, and refrain from grumbling when faced with unplanned discomforts and inconveniences.

**Discretion** – Leaders should always exercise appropriate discretion in speaking about the business of Encounter, avoiding gossip about persons in the ministry, and not sharing information which has not been made public knowledge.

# Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures

## Section 10

**The overarching principle** for resolving conflict within the Encounter community follows the guideline presented in Matthew 18:15-17. When living and working within community hurt feelings, miscommunication, unloving interactions, and conflict will arise from time to time. And these can be great opportunities for growth if handled God's way or situations that cause lasting damage to ourselves and others if we choose to go our own way.

**PRAY ABOUT THE ISSUE** We must all make personal choices about how to respond to conflict, and the first response should always be to pray about the issue with an open, teachable heart. Often the Holy Spirit reveals to us truths and alternative perspectives that make us rethink that troublesome interaction with the other person.

**CALLING THE FIRST MEETING** If a person feels that they need to address the issue, it will be discussed in face to face meetings, rather than through emails or other written communication. If a leader receives an email or letter containing complaints or concerns, the response of the leader will be to kindly help arrange a time and place for the sender and involved parties to discuss the issue.

**ARRANGING THE SECOND MEETING** Meetings addressing issues at ENCOUNTER should include the parties directly involved. The Coordinator or Administrator should be called in only after the people involved have attempted reconciliation without a third party.

**MEETINGS WITH ADMINISTRATORS** If an ENCOUNTER community member would like to discuss issues with the Administrator that pertain directly to one of the ministry departments (ENCOUNTER ACADEMY, BRIDGE, or ENGLISH BIBLE CLUBS), the Coordinator must be present. Other involved parties must also be present.

**THE ROLE OF THE BOARD** The Encounter Board does not play a role in solving personal conflicts within the Encounter Community. Community Members are not permitted to address their issues directly to Board Members. Any communication of this nature received by a Board Member will be passed to the Administrator(s) and sorted out with the appropriate parties.

**ADMINISTRATION FEEDBACK FORM** Encounter Community Members may anonymously complete the Administration Feedback Form detailing the circumstances of their conflict if it is felt the issue was not resolved or handled satisfactorily. These forms are given to the Board to evaluate the job performance of the Encounter Administration and provide accountability.

**DISCRETION AND REFRAINING FROM GOSSIP** Maintaining discretion and refraining from gossip while in the midst of a conflict resolution process is imperative for community health and ministry effectiveness. Encounter Community Members must not share the details and information about the conflict with other Community Members. This constitutes gossip and slander and demonstrates a lack of love and a spirit of retaliation and self-justification that will not be tolerated at ENCOUNTER. Encounter Community Members may confidentially discuss ministry related issues with a neutral counselor outside of the Encounter Community with the intention of receiving biblical guidance and counsel.

**Conflict remains and grows when accompanied by pride, mistrust, and a lack of transparency.**

We do not want to create a community in which people feel as if meetings are taking place behind their backs. Face to face discussions ensure that we are treating the parties involved with the utmost level of respect as a person of value and worth despite the conflict. We are more likely to write things we would never say to someone's face, so save the writing for positive communication. We want to always strive to make our words and actions uplifting and beneficial to all even in the midst of conflict resolution.

*Refusing to follow the Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures may result in temporary suspension from the Encounter Community.*



# Child Safety Policies and Procedures

## Section 11

ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children (persons 0-18) who participate in the programs and activities. Persons accepting a Staff, Volunteer, or Intern positions with Encounter, agree to protect and care for the children within the ministry community in alignment with biblical precepts and local laws.

### Providing Children with Supervision

While on the Encounter campus during regularly scheduled hours, children are under the supervision of the Encounter Staff, Volunteers, and Interns. Encounter personnel should ensure that children are supervised, and the environment is free of hazards. At no time on the Encounter campus or during an Encounter activity should children be left without adult supervision.

### Maintaining Cleanliness & Health

ENCOUNTER is committed to providing children with appropriate care in the event of illness and to preventing the spread of illness to other children. Children who demonstrate or report illness will be moved to a separate comfortable area for rest. Over the counter medications may be administered by the Encounter personnel as deemed appropriate provided such allowances are granted by parents on the child's registration form. In emergency situations children will be taken to a hospital by the quickest means possible and parents will be immediately informed.

It is the responsibility of Encounter personnel to ensure that students are not sharing drinks and food, hands are being washed thoroughly before meals and after putting fingers in the mouth or nose, and items that have been "tasted" are placed into a separate container for proper cleaning. Personnel also assist with daily cleaning and sanitizing of the facilities.

### Protecting Children from Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another dominating child, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **NEGLECT** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

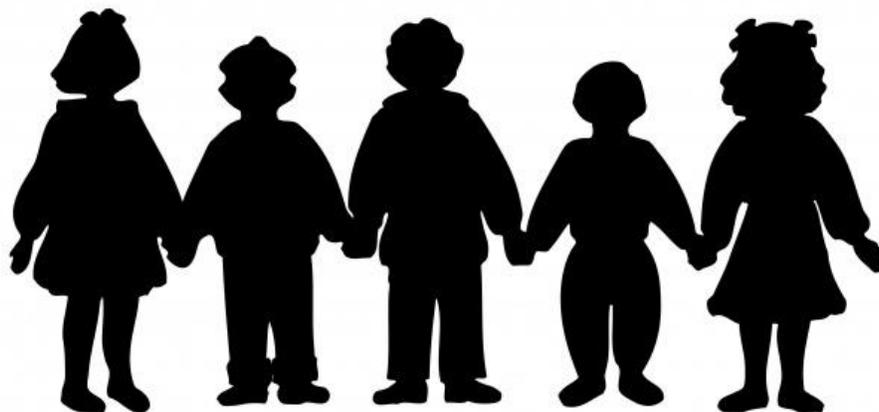
Children may be abused by adults or other children. Any form of child abuse from an Encounter personnel will not be tolerated, and personnel have a responsibility to step in when they suspect a child in the community is being abused. In the interest of maintaining transparency, Encounter personnel are not permitted to be alone in a room, vehicle, or other isolated place with any Encounter students. Doors should be kept open to rooms, meeting spaces should be visible, and physical touch limited to cultural greetings, brief side hugs, and a comforting hand on the shoulder.

### Preparing Students for Emergencies

Encounter personnel assist and lead students in learning the appropriate procedures in the event of a lock down or evacuation. Drills are held bi-annually.

Child safety topics will be addressed more thoroughly during Start Up, and Staff, Volunteers, and Interns will complete Child Abuse Prevention Training.

*Adapted from template provided by [www.ChurchSafe.com](http://www.ChurchSafe.com)*



# Communication

## Section 12

### *Face to Face Meetings*

Face-to-face meetings are the preferred form of communication within the Encounter Community and should be the first option. Meeting with individuals in person ensures the information is delivered and received, allows for questions and feedback, and reduces the incident of misunderstandings. Also, it is not always possible for personnel to be near a phone or computer. Formal meetings and group meetings should be followed by or accompanied with a written memo summarizing the key points of the discussion and next steps. A record of all group and formal meetings are kept on file. The “Record of Meeting Form” is located in the appendix and should be completed and submitted after holding a formal meeting with another individual within the Encounter Community.

### *Resolving Conflicts in Person*

As stated in the “Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures” if an Encounter Community Member has an issue that needs resolved with another Encounter Community Member, this information and any details related to it should not be communicated through any form other than in a face-to-face meeting or video chat. Texts or emails with such information will be discarded, and the sender will be assisted with finding an appropriate time to discuss the issue with the appropriate parties.

### *Communication Tools*

Staff, Volunteers, & Interns will be issued an email address, and ministry business should primarily be conducted using this address. Please answer all emails related to your ministry work promptly and with good etiquette. Using an instant messaging service to communicate when appropriate is acceptable, but please do not create messaging groups.



### *Communication with Minors*

Encounter personnel should never email, message, or call a minor in the Encounter community without the parent or guardian also being included in the communication.

## *Maintaining Boundaries*

Mass communicating with Encounter Community Members in any form to express political views, discuss views on secondary doctrines, or express personal issues that would jeopardize the ministry or a member of the Encounter Community is strictly prohibited. Therefore, staff, volunteers, and interns using social media sites must either filter their communication on such sites through these guidelines or choose to not invite Encounter Community Members to access personal sites.

**No communication to the Encounter Community should be in contradiction to the mission, statement of faith, policies and procedures, or goals of ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS.**



# Evaluation, Review, & Improvement Processes

## Section 13

*We endeavor to continually increase the quality and effectiveness of our ministry programs and seek to grow in skills and maturity through Encounter's yearly Evaluate & Grow Cycle. In this cycle feedback and evaluations are collected from August until June. In July Encounter personnel come together to discuss, create, rethink, and innovate. New initiatives are agreed upon through private voting, and then put into motion in the following weeks for a new ministry year. The Evaluate & Grow Cycle also includes the bi-annual Evaluation & Growth Conference for Encounter Community Members.*

### Feedback Forms

These forms are designed to provide Encounter Community Members with an ongoing channel of communication. They are intended to be completed anonymously and cover a wide range of ministry areas. Forms may be completed at any time by any Community Member and placed in the Feedback Forms Box. At times groups of Community Members may be specifically asked to complete a Feedback Form. Feedback Forms are greatly valued and used to improve the programs of the ministry. Submitted forms are regularly disbursed to the appropriate persons for review. After review, a Feedback Form Response Card is completed and attached to the form detailing the next action which will be taken in response to the feedback provided. Feedback Forms should not be used to resolve conflicts between specific individuals.

### Program Improvement

Feedback forms as well as program evaluations assist Encounter personnel in making ongoing improvements to the Encounter programs. It is the duty of the Administration, Coordinators, and Department Heads to carefully review Feedback Forms and summarize key areas in need of improvement. Key areas will be brought before the Encounter personnel during the July Encounter Servicing Weeks, and they will be part of the discussion and voting on program changes. Approved changes will be made by assigned Encounter personnel.

*Votes are weighted according to the position of the Encounter personnel.*

Voting Weights	
Staff Member	1
Full-Time Volunteer	.5 (.75 after 2 years of service)
Part-Time Volunteer / Intern	.25

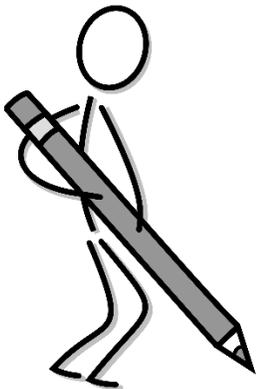
## Evaluations

All Encounter Staff, Volunteers, Bridge Students, and Senior High School students are regularly evaluated for the purpose of ongoing growth and accountability. In order to get a more complete picture, Encounter uses a 360-evaluation process, meaning besides supervisors giving evaluations, parents, students, and coworkers are randomly selected to complete evaluations on personnel as well.

All evaluations completed by persons other than director supervisors shall be completed anonymously. The Evaluation & Growth Conference is conducted by immediate supervisors. The purpose of the conference is to help Encounter Personnel identify areas of strength and weakness and develop a Growth Plan for the next semester.



# Notes



# Bridge Student Commitment Form

*To be completed and submitted at orientation*

Bridge Students commit to participating in the full length of the 11-month program. They agree to submitting any request for time off and fulfilling their duties and responsibilities from the start date to the end date.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name of staff or volunteer) commit to serving with ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS as a Bridge Student starting on the date of \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on the date of \_\_\_\_\_.

I commit to upholding the expectations of a Bridge Student. I understand that this position does not include any monetary compensation from ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Time Off Request Form

*Requests should be submitted no less than two weeks in advance of absence.*

Please remember that if time off is granted to a Bridge Student during the regular program schedule, it is the responsibility of the requestee to ensure responsibilities are covered and to communicate those plans with supervisors.

**Name of Requestee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

*The following chart may be completed after submission to the supervisor, but it is the requestee's responsibility to see that the chart is filled out completely.*

<b>Responsibilities Needing Substitute Due to Absence</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Substitute</b>

Signature of Requestee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approval Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Absence for Appointment Request Form

*Requests should be submitted as soon as the appointment is made.*

This form should be submitted as soon as the appointment is made and approval to miss work should be granted by the supervisor. It is the responsibility of the requestee to ensure ministry responsibilities are covered and to communicate those plans with supervisors.

**Name of Requestee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date and Hours Requested Off for Appointment:** \_\_\_\_\_

*The following chart may be completed after submission to the supervisor, but it is the requestee's responsibility to see that the chart is filled out completely.*

<b>Responsibilities Needing Substitute Due to Absence</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Substitute</b>

Signature of Requestee: \_\_\_\_\_

Approval Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Record of Meeting

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Persons Present: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Directions:* Complete this form to keep a record of all official meetings. Keep completed forms in Record of Meeting Binder. Insert printed agenda into binder for group meetings.

Purpose of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Next Steps	Responsible Persons	Step Completed (check)

- Follow Up Message sent to involved persons and persons responsible for next steps.

## Photo Opt Out Form

*This form is completed and submitted to the Encounter office or [info@encountereim.com](mailto:info@encountereim.com) only by those persons NOT wishing to grant the ministry or Encounter Community Members permission to use their photo in printed or electronic publications.*

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name) do NOT give permission for ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS or other ENCOUNTER Community Members to use my photo in electronic or printed publications.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Internal Use:

Request noted and communicated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Evaluation of Encounter Interns & Senior High School Students

Person Evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

## Academic Behaviors & Responsibilities

Manages time well and works on assignments well ahead of due dates.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Organizes materials and assignments and maintains organization.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Regularly reviews academic content rather than relying on cramming for exams.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Takes notes while reading, listening, and studying.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Willing to learn from mistakes and move on with an optimistic outlook.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Tries to find answers and solutions for his or herself first before asking for help.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Studies and works on assignments even when they do not feel like it.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A

## Relationships & Communication

Demonstrates greater interest in listening and understanding others than making known their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Forgives easily and is not easily offended or angered by others.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Chooses to look for the good in others. Avoids gossip. Is not overly negative or critical when working with others.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Maintains a good reputation in the community as consistent, fair, and others centered.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A

## Work Habits / Professionalism

Follows the policies and procedures of the ministry with a positive attitude.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Attends required activities, follows dress code, arrives promptly, and informs supervisors when unable to attend an activity.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Works diligently throughout workdays, events, and activities. Puts the needs of others and the ministry above personal comforts.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Refrains from complaining about assigned tasks. Completes work joyfully and willingly.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Submits to the authority placed over them in the ministry joyfully and willingly.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A

## Christian Character and Maturity

Displays the fruits of the spirit. (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Regularly participates with a Bible-believing church and takes time for daily personal devotions.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Possess a teachable spirit eager to learn and grow.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A
Secure in his or her position in Christ and desires to see others come to know the Lord.	Always Occasionally	Most of the Time Never N/A

In your opinion, what is one area in which he or she is doing very well?

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In your opinion, what is one area in which you believe he or she can grow?

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Other Comments:

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