



EXTRACURRICULAR GUIDE

Mission Statement

The mission of FOCUS is to assist students in becoming active participants in the prevention of adolescent risk behaviors, as identified in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

Implementing the FOCUS Program as an Extracurricular Activity

The majority of the FOCUS Program schools have implemented the program as an extracurricular activity. Some schools and facilitators provide FOCUS through an elective class. There are advantages and disadvantages to each method. Time restraints often prevent student leaders from participating in the extracurricular format, and some class schedules prevent the elective class from being an option. FOCUS can be implemented as an extracurricular activity or an elective class. Through active participation, students may strengthen college applications and develop skills and interests that may last a lifetime.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Become familiar with the overall goals, objectives, vision, and mission of the program.
- Complete the registration form and sign-up for the e-Newsletter at www.thefocusprogram.com.
- Recruit members (recruit **each spring** for the next school year)
- Organize with officers and committee chairs which will be the Executive Council
- Set a date for the FOCUS kick-off in the fall and promote program
- Under the leadership of the Executive Council, plan the agenda for the first meeting, i.e., decide on monthly health observances, campus concerns to target, and related prevention activities.
- Carry out FOCUS prevention activities and document throughout the year.
- Nominate facilitator for "Difference Maker of the Year" .
- Participate in statewide student events and teacher trainings

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recruit members allowing **all** interested students an opportunity to participate
 - Utilize FOCUS posters and announcements to motivate participation
 - Distribute brochures/information; publicize each meeting date.
- First meeting
 - Determine/announce the yearly membership dues (to be paid by second meeting)
 - Provide an overview of FOCUS and the roles of leadership positions
 - Show the FOCUS Promotional video from the website
 - Review the Guiding Principles
 - Elect (or announce selected) officers
 - Announce Executive Council meeting date/time
 - With input from members:
 - Decide prevention activities for the school year
 - Schedule days and times for future meetings
 - Determine community service projects
 - Follow agenda set by Executive Council
 - Distribute **Committee Request Form** (page 12) for membership job assignments
 - Each meeting should include a speaker, or program, on a health topic to be addressed in selected prevention activities. Utilize meeting time for planning prevention activities.

FOCUS PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOCUS promotes school and community partnerships for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other adolescent risk behaviors. The program is based on a student-led approach and seeks to encourage youth involvement in the planning of prevention activities.

ARTICLE I. NAME AND LOCATION OF ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Name of the Organization

The name of the organization shall be FOCUS.

Section 2. Location of the Organization

The main office of FOCUS shall be in Hoover, Alabama.

Web Site: www.thefocusprogram.com

ARTICLE II. MISSION AND VISION

Section 1. Mission

The mission of FOCUS is to provide opportunities, resources, and guidance for student-led prevention of adolescent risk behaviors.

Section 2. Vision

The vision of FOCUS is to help students establish and maintain healthy behaviors so that they can be successful in school and life.

ARTICLE III. DISTRICT STRUCTURE

Section 1. Designation

There are eight (8) Districts in the state designated by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH).

Section 2. Linkages with District Networks

The schools shall develop linkages with the ADPH prevention coordinators.

Northern: Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, Marion, Winston, Lawrence, Limestone, Morgan, Cullman, Madison, Marshall, and Jackson Counties

Northeastern: DeKalb, Cherokee, Etowah, Blount, St. Clair, Calhoun, Talladega, Cleburne, Shelby, Clay, and Randolph Counties

West Central: Lamar, Fayette, Pickens, Walker, Tuscaloosa, Greene, Sumter, Hale, Perry, Chilton, and Bibb Counties

Jefferson: Jefferson County

East Central: Coosa, Tallapoosa, Chambers, Elmore, Macon, Lee, Russell, Bullock, Montgomery, Autauga, and Lowndes Counties

Southwestern: Choctaw, Marengo, Wilcox, Dallas, Clarke, Washington, Monroe, Conecuh, Escambia, and Baldwin Counties

Southeastern: Butler, Pike, Barbour, Crenshaw, Coffee, Dale, Henry, Covington, Geneva, and Houston Counties

Mobile: Mobile County

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Requirements

To coincide with FOCUS guidelines, member schools shall endorse the mission and vision of FOCUS and meet membership criteria established by individual school.

Section 2. Admission and Membership

The following process will determine active membership:

- 2.1 Application for **school** membership shall be submitted on the website annually at www.thefocusprogram.com by the facilitator.
- 2.2 Application form for **student** membership must be submitted to the individual school's FOCUS facilitator(s). (See page 8 for basic application and page 9 for peer helper application.)
- 2.3 Each school will recruit members during the second semester for next school year.
- 2.4 Membership will consist of students who are in Grades 7-12. Membership, using mentioned designated guidelines, is determined and selected by individual schools.
- 2.5 Members are expected to follow these Guiding Principles of FOCUS and will sign the **Commitment Contract** (page 10).

Section 3. Membership Meetings

- 3.1 The general membership shall meet at least monthly. Members must be notified of the specific time, location, and agenda for the meeting at least seven days in advance of the meeting.
- 3.2 Special meetings may be called by the FOCUS facilitator when needed.
- 3.3 All members are expected to attend meetings and participate in the planned activities.
- 3.4 The FOCUS facilitator must be notified **in advance** if a member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting for the absence to be excused.
- 3.5 Three unexcused absences or non-participation in scheduled activities may be grounds for dismissal from FOCUS.
- 3.6 The decision for dismissal will be made by a unanimous vote of the FOCUS officers (Executive Council) and facilitator(s).

Section 4. Quorum

A quorum of 1/3 of the FOCUS membership will be necessary to conduct business.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Section 1. Selection of Officers and Committees

Officers and Committee Chairpersons shall be named from among members by either the facilitator(s) or elected by the membership (at the discretion of the facilitator) and will serve a one-year term. They may be re-elected or appointed to serve additional terms.

Section 2. Officers

The officers of FOCUS shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Service Chairperson, Drama/Video/Skit Chairperson Peer Educator/Speakers Bureau Chairperson, Public Relations/Publicity Chairperson.

- 2.1 **President:** The President shall be the primary officer; preside at all the meetings; be responsible for the oversight of all membership duties; be responsible for the coordination of all FOCUS activities, including but not limited to preparation of the FOCUS meeting agendas, appointing committee chairs, attending all committee meetings and overseeing the implementation of

- committee work; participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council, and serve on the Executive Council.
- 2.2 Vice-President:** The Vice-President shall be responsible for presiding at the FOCUS meetings in the absence of the President; work with the President in overseeing and assisting with the coordination of FOCUS duties and activities; attend committee meetings in the absence of the President; keep attendance at all the meetings; participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council, and serve on the Executive Council.
- 2.3 Secretary:** The Secretary shall keep accurate records of all FOCUS meetings; report minutes from previous meetings at each FOCUS meeting; develop and mail general correspondence requested by the President; send out notices of meeting to the membership seven days before a regular meeting and two days prior to a specially called meeting; participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council; and serve on the Executive Council.
- 2.4 Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall serve as the chair of the fundraising committee; be responsible for taking the lead in the development of ideas to raise funds for projects; write thank you notes to donors; keep accurate financial records of deposits and expenditures; collect dues and send out past due notices; participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council; and serve on the Executive Council.
- 2.5 Community Service Chairperson:** The Community Service Chairperson shall be responsible for selecting and organizing at least two (2) volunteer service opportunities each school year that will benefit the school and community.
- 2.6 Drama/ Video/Skit Chairperson:** The Drama/Video/Skit Chairperson shall be responsible for assisting with the planning, writing, selecting, and scheduling of skits to relay the message of FOCUS to the high school, elementary schools, and community; participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council, and serve on the Executive Council.
- 2.7 Peer Educators/Speakers Bureau Chairperson:** The Peer Educators/Speakers Bureau Chairperson shall be responsible for relaying information concerning peer-education programs to the schools and community; speak publicly on behalf of FOCUS (when asked); participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council, and serve on the Executive Council.
- 2.8 Public Relations/Publicity Chairperson:** The Public Relations/Publicity Chairperson shall be responsible for taking the lead in the development of material (printed or otherwise) to publicize projects and planned programs; participate in any other activity deemed necessary by the Executive Council; and serve on the Executive Council.

Section 3. Committees

FOCUS members will be provided an opportunity to volunteer for the committee(s) of their choice. Each member is required to serve on at least one committee.

- 3.1 Community Service:** Plan and organize at least two (2) volunteer service opportunities that will benefit the school and community. Recruit FOCUS members to participate.
- 3.2 Drama/Video/Skit:** Comprised of photographers, videographers, writers, and actors. Videos and pictures will be posted on FOCUS' social media pages.
- 3.3 Fundraising:** Responsible for the solicitation of funds and fundraising for needed expenses. Designing and ordering T-shirts and other selected items and materials

- 3.4 **Peer Helpers/Speakers Bureau:** Comprised of the public speakers and peer helpers. Additional training and facilitator/parental approval will be required.
- 3.5 **Public Relations/Publicity:** Responsible for advertising prevention activities and events. This committee will include making posters and fliers, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), contacting newspapers, radio, and television stations, inviting honored guests to programs, and decorating for assemblies and programs.
- 3.6 **Technology/Social Media Network:** Setup and maintain program Facebook/Twitter/Instagram pages; produce the FOCUS video for the “Difference Maker of the Year” Award to afreitag@thefocusprogram.com.

ARTICLE VI. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Executive Council shall be comprised of the officers and committee chairpersons. The Executive Council will be responsible for conducting FOCUS business and making decisions on behalf of FOCUS in place of the full membership when necessary. Individuals interested in serving on the Executive Council must be nominated and selected in accordance with school requirements.

ARTICLE VII. CONFIDENTIALITY

The FOCUS Program will ensure the confidentiality of its members and those participating in focus groups or peer-education sessions by taking every reasonable method to protect them. Each member has accepted responsibilities for adhering to the confidentiality of all FOCUS Program proceedings by applying for membership. All FOCUS members must sign the **Pledge of Confidentiality Form** (page 11).

It is the responsibility of all FOCUS members to maintain the confidentiality of other members. Breach of confidentiality by any member of the FOCUS Program will be considered grounds for dismissal.

ARTICLE VIII. GUIDING PRINCIPLES: RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Ratification

Ratification of the Guiding Principles for the FOCUS Program shall require an affirmative vote of the majority of a quorum.

Section 2. Amendments

An affirmative vote of the majority of a quorum is required before a proposed alteration, deletion, addition, or amendment can be adopted into the Guiding Principles.

Date of Adoption _____



General Membership Application

Date: _____

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Contact Information:

E-Mail Address: _____

OR Preferred Method of Contact: _____

Check One:

_____ New Member _____ Previous Member

FOCUS Peer Helper's Application Form

FOCUS is based on a youth-led approach, which emphasizes partnerships between the Alabama Department of Public Health, community agencies, and schools. The program seeks to promote student-led prevention of adolescent risk behaviors identified in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Selected FOCUS members will be participating in prevention activities and peer helper's sessions involving health and risk behaviors. To be selected you must have exemplified outstanding character/morals, leadership abilities, and maturity to handle confidential matters relating to other students. Your academic standing should be at least a 3.0 GPA, teacher recommendations will be considered, and you cannot have any OSS or major infractions of ISS on your present and previous years' school record. You must sign the pledge at the bottom of this application form!

Name _____ Grade _____

Advisory Teacher _____

GPA _____

OSS Infraction? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, when and why _____

Major infraction of ISS? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, when and why _____

List other clubs in which you are currently involved:

List your extracurricular activities:

Writing Assessment: (answer on a separate page)

Explain why you are interested in The FOCUS Program. What has stirred a passion in you to want to be involved with health and risk behaviors in youth?

How can you contribute to the program? What talents or abilities can you offer to make The FOCUS Program improve and grow?

PLEDGE: I pledge that I will abstain from alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sexual activity, and bullying. If I break this pledge at any time while being affiliated with FOCUS, I fully understand that I will be dismissed from the program.

Signature of Applicant



The FOCUS Program Commitment Contract

I, _____, am aware of my commitment to FOCUS. **I have read the Guiding Principles and understand the consequences if I do not uphold my duties as a member/officer.** I commit myself to being an involved member/officer by attending meetings and participating in the program's activities. I realize the nature of the topics that may be discussed or need to be handled as a member and accept this responsibility. I realize being a member or officer to another club does not exempt me from the responsibility of being a member of FOCUS. If I cannot represent this program with pride and dignity, I will withdraw my membership.

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____



Pledge of Confidentiality

FOCUS members will be participating in prevention activities and peer helping sessions. Nearly all of these events are based on information involving health and risk behaviors. All members must recognize their responsibilities and refrain from discussing any information gathered from these events with anyone other than a Focus facilitator, school counselor, or school nurse.

Knowing this, I pledge that I will not reveal, nor repeat, personal information gathered as a result of my participating in FOCUS.

Printed name

Signature

Date



FOCUS Program Committee Request Form

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Mobile Number: _____ T-Shirt Size: _____

Committee Choices: Place the number 1, 2, or 3 (in order of preference) in the blanks provided.

_____ Community Service

_____ Drama/Video/Skit

_____ Fundraising

_____ Peer Educators/Speakers Bureau

_____ Public Relations/Publicity

_____ Technology/Social Media Network



FOCUS Program Committee Request Form

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Mobile Number: _____ T-Shirt Size: _____

Committee Choices: Place the number 1, 2, or 3 (in order of preference) in the blanks provided.

_____ Community Service

_____ Drama/Video/Skit


_____ Fundraising

_____ Peer Educators/Speakers Bureau

_____ Public Relations/Publicity

_____ Technology/Social Media Network

FOCUS



APPENDICES

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FORMS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Returning FOCUS member letter | page 13 |
| 2. Acceptance letter | page 14 |
| 3. Denial letter | page 15 |
| 4. Attendance Roster (grades 7-8) | page 16 |
| 5. Attendance Roster (grades 9-12) | page 17 |



[DATE]

FOCUS Members

[SCHOOL YEAR] MEMBERSHIP

We are currently taking applications from prospective members of FOCUS. We need to make sure that our current members are willing to stay involved next year. Please answer the following questions and return this form to [FACILITATOR(S) NAME] by [DATE]. **Be sure to read, understand, and sign the pledge at the bottom of the application form.** We appreciate all that you did for the cause of saving lives this year and look forward to another year together to educate our peers on the consequences of engaging in risky behaviors. What you do can make a difference; even if just for one person, it is worth our time.

Name _____

Are you willing to continue your affiliation and commitment to FOCUS?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you answered “yes”, do you want to remain on the same committee of service in which you served this year?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you want to change, what committee would you most like to serve on next year?

- _____ Drama/Video/Skit Committee
- _____ Fundraising
- _____ Peer Helpers Committee
- _____ Public Relations/Publicity Committee
- _____ Technology/Social Media Network

PLEDGE: I pledge that I will abstain from alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sexual activity, and bullying. If I break this pledge at any time while being affiliated with FOCUS, I understand that I will be dismissed from the program.

Signature of FOCUS member



[DATE]

Dear _____:

On behalf of FOCUS, we would like to congratulate you for being selected for membership. You possess the outstanding character, leadership qualities, and social skills needed to continue to make FOCUS a success at [SCHOOL NAME]. Over the next year, you will be expected to dedicate your time and services to FOCUS. You will be working hard to help educate your peers on relevant and important facts and consequences of their actions. We hope to make a positive difference and serve as a positive influence in the lives of others.

Your first official meeting will be [DATE] in the [LOCATION] and [TIME]. We look forward to your joining our organization. We have a lot of work to do as a group, and we are excited that you will be a part of our team. Once again, congratulations on your membership into FOCUS.

Sincerely,

FOCUS Facilitators and Executive Council



[DATE]

Dear _____:

On behalf of FOCUS, we would like to thank you for your interest in applying for membership. However, due to limited membership slots and qualifications, we regretfully inform you that your membership in FOCUS has been denied at this time. We will accept applications for membership in the spring for next year, and we encourage you to apply again at that time.

If you have any questions regarding your membership, you may speak to any FOCUS facilitator, and he/she will try to assist you in any way possible. Again, thanks for your interest in this program.

Sincerely,

FOCUS Facilitators and Executive Council

ATTENDANCE ROSTER – [SCHOOL YEAR]

NAME		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
9 th Grade										
10 th Grade										
11 th Grade										
12 th Grade										

