

Policies
for
Activities with
Children & Youth
Diocese of Fairbanks

Revised 2015

Contents

Introduction	3
1.0 Vetting for Volunteer Service.....	4
1.1 Diocesan Criminal Background Screening.....	4
1.2 Child Safe Environment Training.....	4
2.0 Supervision of Youth:	5
2.1 Number of Chaperones.....	5
2.2 Supervision of Young People	5
3.0 Gathering Places	6
3.1 Overnight Accommodations	6
3.2 Private Residences	6
4.0 Transportation	7
4.1 Events with access to a road system.....	7
4.2 Events without access to a road system	8
4.2.1 <i>Parish owned vehicles</i>	8
4.2.2 <i>Independent arrangements</i>	8
5.0 Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy.....	9
5.1 Policies for Adult Leaders.....	9
5.2 Recommended Policies for Parish/School Events with Youth	9
5.3 Policies for Youth and Young Adults	10
6.0 Permission Forms.....	11

Introduction

With the 2011 revision of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, together the United States Bishops and the Diocese of Fairbanks re-affirm our deep commitment to creating a safe environment within the Church for children and youth. Therefore the following policies stem from our commitment to the protection of young people and our desire to stand in solidarity with them as we minister to their multi-faceted development in faith.

While not every situation or combination of events can be addressed in a policy manual, what follows are the foundational precepts by which ministry to youth can be offered in a safe and sound manner. When an unforeseen event arises that may deviate from these policies, adult leaders and chaperones are encouraged to first address the immediate concern and to notify the Office of Youth and Young Adult ministry as soon as possible for clarification and advice.

All adult leaders in ministry are reminded that because of their role as Church Personnel, they have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that is beyond reproach and always in the best interests of the young people.

1.0 Vetting for Volunteer Service

1.1 Diocesan Criminal Background Screening

All adult chaperones, young adults present, and youth who serve as supervisory roles for younger children at any youth event must complete the diocesan criminal background screening.

1.2 Child Safe Environment Training

All adult chaperones, young adults present, or youth who serve as supervisory roles for younger children who serve:

- at any overnight event or
- more than one event in a calendar year

must complete diocesan screening and training for Child-Safe Environment prior to service. This includes but is not limited to: catechists, athletic coaches, scout leaders, and drivers. In short, any adult, young adult or youth with supervisory responsibilities who has regular or overnight access to children and/or adolescents needs to complete this process prior to activities involving young people. The person who will supervise the volunteer should meet with him/her to discuss the role that the volunteer will have in the program.

2.0 Supervision of Youth:

Determining the number of adults needed for supervision of minor adolescents depends on a number of factors: the nature of the activity, the age of the adolescents and the location of the activity. Unless the group being supervised is either all boys or all girls, there must be at least 1 (one) chaperone of each gender.

The parish/school youth/young adult ministry team should make sure that adults are present at the gathering site early enough to greet all participants as they arrive. A minimum of two (2) adults also need to be present until the last participant has left.

2.1 Number of Chaperones

All chaperones must be twenty-one years of age or older.

All activities require a minimum of two (2) adults chaperones, 21 years of age or older for the first ten (10) young people with a 1:10 ratio continuing thereafter.

Overnight activities require a minimum of two (2) adult chaperones, 21 years of age or older for the first eight (8) young people with a 1:8 ratio continuing thereafter.

2.2 Supervision of Young People

While constant supervision is required for younger adolescents, proper supervision for high school youth does not always require constant presence if there is an event with sufficient appropriate boundaries and young people are in groups of at least 3. Periodic, in-person check-in by high school age youth to their assigned group leader is required to take place at a minimum of four (4) hour intervals.

In cases where risk is greater due to the nature of the experience, supervision by professionals with appropriate training and constant presence may be appropriate for all adolescents (for example: floating the river).

At all times, participants should be aware of the quickest way of reaching their leader.

3.0 Gathering Places

3.1 Overnight Accommodations

Gender Policies

On overnight trips, participants should be clear about the restrictions concerning sleeping areas. In general, there should never be mixed gender gatherings in the sleeping areas. Whether you are camping in tents, using a retreat house, or hotel rooms, boys should never be in the girls sleeping areas and vice versa. Further, adjoining rooms, (rooms connecting through a doorway) must not be assigned to mixed genders.

Chaperone: Youth Policies

No adult chaperone should ever enter a youth's room unless it is absolutely necessary regardless of whether the youth is present or not. If the circumstances require it, the chaperone must be accompanied by another adult and if youth are present, the door to the room must remain open the entire time that the adults are in the youth's room. Where possible, the adults should be of the same gender as the occupants of the room. A youth must never be invited or instructed to enter the bedroom of an adult chaperone.

Young adults who have reached the age of nineteen (19) but who are not yet twenty-one (21) are considered neither participants nor chaperones and must have accommodations separate from the youth and chaperones unless in a dormitory-style setting.

Non-Dormitory Style Accommodations

For overnight activities where the accommodations host ten (10) or less people, youth and adults are to have separate accommodations. Adult chaperones may not share rooms/tents/cabins nor adjoining rooms with young people.

Dormitory-Style Accommodations

At no time are adults to share rooms/suites/tents/cabins/dormitories that accommodate less than ten (10) people. Where possible, there should be a minimum of 2 adults proportionate to the gender of the participants assigned to the area where young people are sleeping.

Adults should continue supervision after lights out to ensure that young people are safe and where they belong. All-night supervision for high school youth is not always necessary provided that the youth know how to contact an adult chaperone.

3.2 Private Residences

When planning youth/young adult ministry events, the use of private residences is prohibited unless all of the following are met:

- Explicit permission from the host is given.
- Every member of the household present has been screened by the diocesan Office of Human Resources.

4.0 Transportation

4.1 Events with access to a road system.

The preferred method of transportation to all activities involving youth and young adults off of parish or school property would be bus or, in the case of long distances, plane.

In a situation where that is not affordable, the organizers of the event may arrange for drivers. All drivers should be 21 years of age, be properly insured and have a good driving record. All volunteer drivers for events who drive 1) on a regular basis (more than 3 times per year) or 2) for trips exceeding 50 miles each way need to complete the Driving Record Check Consent Form. *Under no circumstance is it acceptable for the parish/school to arrange for youth to drive other youth to an activity.*

If a parent allows a minor son or daughter to drive directly to an activity, the parent(s) should understand that they assume liability for that transportation. If a parent would like a minor son or daughter to ride with another minor to or from an activity, the parent(s) need to communicate that to the youth/young adult ministry team in writing. Of course when a minor rides with another young person it is important that both sets of parents understand that the liability is assumed by the holder of the policy on that car.

Transportation to and from all youth/young adult ministry activities held on parish property is the responsibility of the parent. In situations where young people are walking to and from the activity, parents are again responsible for their young people before they arrive and after they leave parish property.

In some cases it may be arranged to have young people gather at another site in the community other than the parish. If parents are notified of this other location, then the parents can be asked to assume responsibility for transportation to and from this site.

4.2 Events without access to a road system

The use of boats, four-wheelers, and snow machines for transport to a youth/young adult ministry event off of parish property or at another parish is acceptable in those areas without a road system.

4.2.1 Parish owned vehicles

If the mode of transport is through the use of parish vehicles, helmets must be worn by all parties on four wheelers or snow machines.

If the mode of transport is through the use of a parish owned boat, in accordance with Alaska State law, lifejackets must be worn by all parties.

4.2.2 Independent arrangements

At no time will the youth/young adult ministry team coordinate the travel to a parish, between parishes, or to a third location that depends on boat, four wheeler, or snow machine.

If a parent allows a minor son or daughter to drive directly to an activity, the parent(s) should understand that they assume liability for that transportation. If a parent would like a minor son or daughter to ride with another minor to or from an activity, the parent(s) need to communicate that to the youth/young adult ministry team in writing. Of course when a minor rides with another young person it is important that both sets of parents understand that the liability is assumed by the holder of the policy on that car.

Transportation to and from all youth/young adult ministry activities held on parish property is the responsibility of the parent. In situations where young people are walking to and from the activity, parents are again responsible for their young people before they arrive and after they leave parish property.

In some cases it may be arranged to have young people gather at another site in the community other than the parish. If parents are notified of this other location, then the parents can be asked to assume responsibility for transportation to and from this site.

5.0 Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy

5.1 Policies for Adult Leaders

Adult leaders may not consume alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or abuse over-the-counter or prescription medication at any Catholic youth ministry event. This restriction applies around-the-clock at overnight events, including during the evening hours after the young people have gone to sleep.

Adult leaders who provide or assist youth in obtaining alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs for their consumption will be dismissed immediately. Adult leaders who provide or assist youth in the abuse of over-the-counter or prescription drugs will be dismissed immediately. The Diocese will cooperate with local police to pursue prosecution for these offenses.

Adult leaders must refrain from alcohol or marijuana consumption whenever they are present with youth in a youth to youth minister relationship. This might include youth ministers who go out for pizza with young people after an event or attending a graduation party at the home of a young person.

Adult leaders must inform the parents of any young person under the age of twenty-one (21) who has consumed alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or abused over-the-counter or prescription drugs. This is in keeping with our partnership with parents.

5.2 Recommended Policies for Parish/School Events with Youth

Gatherings that are primarily youth oriented should not serve alcohol. (For example, basketball awards ceremonies.)

Parishes, scout troops or schools who sponsor events for intergenerational audiences where alcohol will be available have the responsibility to ensure that no under-age drinking will be allowed. Parishes or schools that sponsor events for intergenerational audiences where alcohol will be available should make sure that parents of youth are aware that alcohol will be available/served to adults. Parishes or schools who sponsor events for intergenerational audiences where alcohol will be served should act to ensure that responsible drinking is modeled for the young people present.

An underage person should never be placed in the position of tending bar, or serving alcohol. This is not legal under Alaska law.

5.3 Policies for Youth and Young Adults

Youth and young adults under the age of 21 who are under the influence of or consume alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or abuse over-the-counter or prescription medication at diocesan youth/young adult ministry or school events will be dismissed from that activity at the first safe opportunity and their parents will be notified.

The diocese reserves the right to restrict young people at future youth/young adult ministry events for underage drinking or substance abuse.

When it is appropriate, young people who are in violation of our policy will be encouraged to seek counseling or support.

Parishes and schools reserve the right to set and enforce their own policies regarding under age alcohol consumption or substance abuse at parish/school events. These policies need to be consistent with the statutes of the State of Alaska and the policies of the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska.

6.0 Permission Forms

All activities held outside the parish and all activities that include an overnight, require the diocesan permission form that is accompanied by an information sheet for the parents/guardians, outlining the program and noting emergency phone numbers. The diocesan permission form is included at the end of this manual.

Note: it is not appropriate to use one permission form for the entire year or even several different types of activities. It is OK for the permission form to cover multiple meetings for the same activity, for example, 4-week bible study, sports seasons or school year activities.

**DIOCESE OF FAIRBANKS
PERMISSION FORM AND RELEASE**

Name of Participating Child (Print) _____ Birth Date _____

Address _____

Work Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email address: _____

Emergency Contact (name and telephone number): _____

As parent or guardian of my son/daughter, I do hereby agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in the following activity (event/date/time):

I acknowledge receipt of the attached information sheet describing the planned activity.

In consideration of the opportunity for my son/daughter to participate in the activity, the receipt and sufficiency of which are acknowledged, I knowingly and voluntarily on behalf of myself and my minor child do hereby agree to forever RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFY name of parish or school, the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska and his successors, a Corporation Sole, and all their affiliate organizations, and respective agents, employees, officers, directors, volunteers, and any officials, referees, and other participants (the Released Parties) from any liability, claims, demands and causes of action arising out of or relating to any loss, damage or injury (including death) sustained in connection with or arising out of my son/daughter's participation in the activity. By my signature below, I acknowledge that my child's participation in the activity involves inherent risk of minor or serious injury, including permanent disability, death, and/or economic losses which might result from my child's actions or inactions, the negligence of others, the inherent risks of the activity, the rules of play, the condition of the premises, or of any equipment used. I have voluntarily elected to allow my child to participate, and I fully understand, appreciate, and hereby assume all such dangers and risks.

I understand that my child's participation in said activities may require a minimum level of fitness for safe participation, and that the Released Parties do not screen, medically or otherwise, individuals that participate in the activity. I acknowledge that it is my sole responsibility to make certain that my child is physically fit and healthy enough to participate in the activity.

Videography and Photography

Parents/guardians of participants are advised that photographs or videotape of participants may be used in publications, websites or other materials produced from time to time by the parish/school, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry or the Diocese of Fairbanks. (Participants will not be identified, however, without specific written consent.). Parents/guardians who do not wish their child(ren) to be photographed or filmed should so notify an activity staff member. Please note that the Released Parties have no control over the use of photographs or film taken by media that may be covering the event in which your child(ren) participate(s).

Medical Information

I understand that the Released Parties do not provide medical treatment or medical, health or other insurance coverage for my child, however, I hereby grant permission for any staff member of the activity to obtain medical care from a licensed physician, hospital, or medical clinic for my son/daughter in the event that I cannot be reached.

Medications

_____ I hereby grant permission for my child to take the following provided medications. My child will bring all such medications, well labeled. [NOTE: Any/all prescription medications must be in original pharmacy container with young person’s name on the prescription label. Non-prescription/over-the-counter medications must be in original container with young person’s name on the container.]

Names of medications and concise directions for seeing that the child takes such medications, including dosage and frequency are as follows:

Medication: _____ Dosage: _____ Administer: _____

Medical Conditions Information:

My son/daughter:

- Is allergic to the following medications _____
- Has had allergic reactions to the following (foods, dyes, latex, etc.) _____
- Has had a medical surgery within the last six months? _ Yes _ No Still under doctor’s care? _ Yes _ No
- Has a medically prescribed diet (*please explain*) _____
- Has the following physical limitations _____
- Immunizations current and up to date? _ Yes _ No Date of last tetanus/diphtheria immunization _____
- You should also be aware of these special medical conditions of my child: _____

The primary care provider for my child is: _____. They can be reached by phone at _____. I am covered by hospitalization and medical insurance under: policy# _____ issued by _____

I do not have medical coverage and assume responsibility for the cost of hospitalization and medical care for my son/daughter.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE RELEASE AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND THAT I GIVE UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT VOLUNTARILY.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

YOUTH PARTICIPANT: In signing the line below I agree to abide by any/all policies established for this event/activity. Should I not be able to maintain the guidelines and expectations of the adults and my peers, I understand that there will be consequences for my actions, including being removed from the activity and being sent home at my parent/guardian’s expense.

Signature of Youth _____ Date _____