

DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS

POLICY GOVERNING MINISTRY TO YOUTH

(Revised June 2011)

The following policy, adopted by the Diocese of Memphis in West Tennessee, is intended for all Diocesan programs for young people.

In order to continue to comply with the U.S. Bishops' Charter and Norms for the Protection of Children, everyone in the diocese who interacts with children on a regular basis must attend a VIRTUS© training session. **Prior to working with Children and Youth a background check must be completed and certificate of attendance at a Virtus© session presented.**

TRAINING:

All youth ministers (adults working with youth as leaders, advisors, directors, etc.) are required to receive training in youth ministry sponsored by the Office of Youth/Young Adult Ministries.

FORMS:

Parents/Guardians are to complete a **Health & Medical Form** once a year on all participants. A copy must be kept on file at the parish and **the original medical form must be taken on all overnight or out of town trips.**

(Some hospitals require notarized forms.)

Permission forms must be signed and kept on file for each young person participating in an event. There is one permission form for field trips and one for out of town trips. We understand that it will be difficult to refuse to allow someone to participate in an event, however, it is essential that these permission forms be completed and that **no one should be allowed to participate who has not completed the form. Permission forms need only be taken with you if there is an exception noted.**

For example, if a parent has not given permission for their young person to swim at the picnic by the lake, then a copy of that form must go with you.

An Accident/Injury Report Form must be completed for every incident that involves professional medical attention or for which medical attention has been recommended and declined by the parents or guardians. Keep these on file at the parish and send a copy to the Office of Youth/Young Adult Ministries. When completing an Accident Report, please list it as a parish youth group.

TRANSPORTATION:

a) The **Diocesan Vehicle Safety Policy** requires that all volunteer drivers fill out the standard form for volunteer drivers. This will be kept on file and updated annually. If the volunteer answers yes to any of the questions on the form, they should not be used as a driver. **Drivers for**

youth events must be at least 21 years of age. Drivers must also provide of copy of their insurance information.

b) No vehicle may be allowed to leave the parish site unless they have a **seatbelt available for each passenger.**

c) When more than one vehicle is used to transport participants, all drivers should have **written directions/maps** and be briefed on the area.

d) **At least one vehicle must be equipped with a First Aid Kit.**

e) **No firearms** are to be carried in any vehicle at any time.

CHAPERONS:

a) All chaperons must be **at least 21** years of age.

b) At least **two** of the adult chaperons for each overnight or out of town trip are to be **trained in First Aid; chaperons can receive this training from the Red Cross.** Written verification of training is to be on file at the parish.

c) There are to be a minimum of **one adult chaperon per eight minors.** The chaperons should reasonably be available and visible at all times during the events, take part in enforcing the rules, and take control of any situation that the young people are unable to handle.

d) All adult chaperons are to abide by the **same rules and requirements** given to minors (example: no alcohol consumption at any time during the trip or event).

e) No adult will be considered as a Chaperone if they have been charged with any of the following: drug offenses including possession, distribution, or use of controlled substance or drug paraphernalia, sexual offenses, larceny, violent acts, sexual assault, contributing to the delinquency of a minor or if convicted of a felony.

f) **All chaperons must be approved** by the Pastor, Youth Director or Supervisor of the individual event.

g) Adult chaperones **shall not** at any time **purchase questionable or illegal items** for a minor (example: smoking material, smoking paraphernalia or any smokeless tobacco product, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms, and sexually suggestive materials, clothing or items).

h) Adult leaders are to **refrain from smoking** while in the presence of minors.

i) It is **unlawful** for a minor (under 18 years of age) to smoke or possess smoking material (39-15-407 et seq. Tennessee Code Annotated). Therefore, our young people are not allowed to smoke at our events.

j) On all overnight and/or out-of-town activities adult chaperons should be of the same gender as the participants. (If the young people are male and female, there should be a male and female adult chaperon).

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS:

a) Adults are not to sleep alone with a minor child. The only exception is when the minor is the adult's own child.

b) Care must be taken that sleeping areas are clearly **segregated between males and females**.

c) In situations where males and females share a **common large room** (example: a parish hall), a rotation of adults is to be provided at all times for proper supervision. A sufficient number of chaperons must be available to supervise the area throughout the night.

OUTDOOR CAMPING:

a) It is strongly recommended that tents which can accommodate large numbers be used whenever possible. This will allow for better supervision.

b) There is to be **no coed sleeping** in tents.

c) In the event that outdoor camping is held without tents, there must be enough adult chaperons available so that **at least one adult remains awake throughout the night** to ensure that no minor wanders away from the campsite.

d) **Adults are not to sleep in a tent alone with a minor**, except when the minor is the adult's own child.

HOTEL ROOMS:

a) Care is to be taken when booking hotels for groups. A request must be made upon making reservations that, if possible, **all of the rooms be on the same floor or location in the hotel**.

b) There must be enough adult chaperons available so that **at least one adult remains awake throughout the night** to ensure that no minor leaves their room/hotel.

c) **Adjoining rooms** should be requested when possible for better supervision. All rooms must be checked by the group leader before assigning them to groups to avoid males and females having adjoining doors.

d) **No minor should be allowed to leave the hotel property alone**.

e) Minors are to be informed of **safety rules and security measures** prior to the day, there are to be periodic group meetings to be sure everyone is accounted for.

f) Chaperons are to **set a curfew and make a room check at night**. During the day, there are to be periodic group meetings to be sure that everyone is accounted for.

g) **Pay TV and long distance** telephone lines must be turned off at the hotel desk.

REPORTING ABUSE:

Anyone who obtains information of known or suspected child abuse while in performance of his/her duties for a parish, shall report said information immediately to the Tennessee Department of Child Protection (877) 237-0004 **pastor, pastoral associate or administrator** of the parish for whom he/she is performing duties at the time the information is obtained or, in the pastor's absence, the associate pastor of said parish, and **the diocesan director of human resources**.

EXPECTATIONS:

a) **All movies are to be screened by an adult before they are presented to young people.** Caution should be taken concerning violence and sexually-explicit content.

b) **Priority must be given during any Church overnight trip to ensure that all participants fulfill their Sunday and Holy Day obligations.**