

GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION OF MINORS

Diocese of Boise

The following guidelines are intended for the use of offsite and overnight parish and Diocesan sponsored activities involving minors. They should be adapted in consultation with pastors to fit local circumstances and incorporated into the supervisory procedures of each parish.

These guidelines are intended to offer direction to those who are responsible for the safety of minors (17 and under) during offsite and overnight functions conducted as part of youth ministry, religious education or other educational programs. Types of events would include but are not limited to retreats, sports tournaments, conventions, conferences and recreational trips.

These guidelines are intended to complement the following Diocesan Manuals:

- Sexual Misconduct Policies (Revised March 27, 2007),
- Insurance Advisory Guidelines; and
- Parish and School Safe Environment Program Manual (September, 2004).

Any apparent conflict with any of these documents should be brought to the attention of the Director of Human Resources/CYAP. The conflict should be resolved in the interests of minimal risk to those served.

Independently operated organizations such as the Knights of Columbus or Scouting organizations are subject to their own policies and procedures. However, it is expected that outside organizations have policies and procedures in place that include screening and training for those working with minors which are comparable to that provided through the Diocese of Boise.

The general guideline is that all offsite and overnight events, whether taking place within the boundaries of the Diocese or outside its boundaries, must be carefully planned. The procedure (which may be described as a Standing Operating Procedure or SOP) should be written and include the following information:

- Assessing the risks inherent in the particular event and where appropriate clearing it with the Diocesan insurance carrier;
- Ensuring leadership by persons who have been screened and educated in the Safe Environment Program and who have passed a Diocesan background check;
- Ensuring that other adult chaperones are present in adequate numbers and are appropriately trained, supervised and have passed a Diocesan background check. The current ratio of adults to minors is 1:7 no matter the age of the minor;
- Limiting opportunity for isolated activity of any type among minors or between minors and adults;

- Enhancing accountability, with clear consequences for failure to follow the plan; and,
- Creating channels for feedback and correction if high risk behaviors of any type are observed.

The minimum standard with regard to the age of youth ministers and chaperones, is that only persons who are 21 years of age or older can serve as youth ministers and chaperones for the Diocese of Boise. Anyone providing transportation to others as part of a Diocesan or parish function must be 25 years of age or older and carry at least a minimum amount of insurance as determined by the Diocesan insurance company and State law.

I. Authorization

1. All parish trips must have the approval, both for planning and implementation, of the pastor/PLD or local administration.
2. When event leaders (clergy, consecrated religious or lay) are brought into the Diocese of Boise from another diocese, they must be made known to the Vicar General with sufficient time for the Vicar General to determine that the individual is in good standing with his or her home diocese, religious order or parish.

II. Elementary School Age (PreK-8) Children

1. As a rule, the younger the minors require greater number of adult chaperones. The Diocese of Boise uses a 1:7 ratio at this time for minors of all ages.
2. With minors, it is important to be sure that appropriate releases have been signed by the parents, that parents understand clearly the risks and the plans to mitigate those risks, that any medical conditions and treatments are clearly communicated, and that there are clear procedures that will be followed in case of emergency.

III. Liability and Medical Release and Request to Participate Form

1. Signed Permission/Medical Release Forms are required for all field trips involving minors. Forms may be obtained from the Diocesan Office of Parish Life and Faith Formation or at www.CatholicIdaho.org
2. Youth ministers, religious educators or other coordinators will keep the signed permission slips on file for one year.
3. Any particular needs or conditions affecting the health or well being of a minor should be clearly communicated to the coordinator of the trip or function and reported to the event emergency contact person as soon as reasonably possible.

- a. Emergency treatment forms, signed by the minor's parents or guardians to authorize emergency medical treatment will be carried by the trip or event leader and in each vehicle in which the minor is to be transported.
- b. Such forms should include all health insurance policy numbers, physician contact information, and persons to contact in case of emergency.
- c. Any medication that will be taken on the trip should be in its original packaging and carefully described on the Permission/Medical Release Form in terms of type and regimen for administration by a nurse or other designated person.

IV. Transportation

- 1. It is preferred that transportation be commercially provided by licensed and bonded carriers.
 - a. Carriers must submit evidence of insurance to the Diocese.
- 2. Nevertheless, if transportation is provided by adult volunteers or employees, the driver must be at least 25 years of age, possess a valid driver's license, have completed and turned in the driver's information sheet to the Diocesan finance office 2 weeks prior to the event and transportation guidelines to the parish and/or school office 2 days before the event.
 - a. If the individual will have access to minors, they should have completed the SEW and will have passed a Diocesan background check.
- 3. Privately owned vehicles and drivers must be insured at the minimum levels required by the Diocesan insurance company and State law.
- 4. The ideal situation is one in which two adults are in a car with two or more minors.
 - a. If only one driver is available, then there should be a minimum of two minors in the car.
 - b. There must never be a situation in which there is only one adult and one minor unless they are parent and child.
 - c. For that reason, there must be a common pickup and drop off point for all minors to avoid any situation in which an adult is left one-on-one with a minor.
 - d. Minors should be released only to a parent/guardian or to another person who has been given explicit written permission to take custody of the minors by the parent/guardian.

5. When more than one vehicle is used to transport participants, all drivers must have written directions and should be familiar with the area to which they will be traveling.
6. On long trips, a relief driver must be available at least every eight hours. All drivers should have adequate rest before and after travel.
7. Cars, vans and buses must not exceed the passenger load. All passengers must have a seat; seat belt laws are to be observed at all times. Private vehicles which have nine or more passenger capacity may not be used.
8. No weapons are to be carried in any vehicle at any time.
9. Nothing in these guidelines should be used to contradict the guidelines offered by the insurer with regard to safety and mitigation of potential liability as concerns transportation of minors.

V. Sleeping and Bath Accommodations

1. Adults and chaperones are not to be housed in the same room with minors except when the minor is the child or sibling of the adult or chaperone.
2. As an exception to #1 above, in a large dorm situation adult chaperones of the same gender may be housed in the same room with minors provided that at least 2 adult chaperones and at least four minors are assigned to the dorm. Both of the adult chaperones must have undergone safe environment education and the criminal history background check.
3. There is to be no mixed gender sleeping in tents or hotel rooms unless it is a parent and minor or siblings.
4. Chaperones are not to use a community shower with minors, nor should a chaperone be in any state of undress except in the privacy of his or her room.
5. Clothes changing or showering by minors is not to be supervised by a lone chaperone and never by a chaperone of the opposite gender. All adults and chaperones must exercise extreme caution at these times so that no actions, words, stares, or touches have the potential to be interpreted as inappropriate.
6. When minors are using toilets, adults or chaperones should ensure their privacy. If the need arises to enter the area; the incursion should be only for a brief period of time.

7. In the case of public restrooms, adults or chaperones should be in the vicinity of the restroom to monitor the coming and going of the minors and to be available in case of emergency.
8. Any necessary disciplinary actions are to be carried out after the minor has had the time to be properly dressed and must take place outside of changing, washing or toilet areas.
9. Conversations with minors must always be conducted only when the minors and adults are properly dressed.

VI. Outdoor Camping

1. It is strongly recommended that tents that can accommodate large numbers be used whenever possible. This will allow for better supervision.
2. Adults or chaperones are not to sleep in a tent alone with a minor, except when the minor is the adult or chaperone's own child or siblings.
3. In the event that outdoor camping is held without tents, there must be enough chaperones available so that at least two chaperones remain awake throughout the night to ensure the safety of the group. Ideally, these chaperones would have no other duties during the day so they could sleep.

VII. Hotel Rooms

1. 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 in the hotel, in close proximity.
2. All rooms must be checked by the trip coordinator before assigning them to groups to avoid males and females having adjoining doors. Adjoining rooms should only be shared by minors of the same gender.
3. No minor is to be allowed to leave the hotel property or go swimming in the hotel's pool or use the whirlpool or the hotel's exercise room without adult supervision.
4. Minors must always be informed and reminded of safety rules and security measures.
5. Chaperones must have room keys at all times for minors' rooms. It is recommended that the chaperone monitor rooms periodically; however, chaperones should conduct such monitoring in pairs.

6. If adults and minors are housed in the same room, there should be a minimum of two adults and two minors in the room, excepting families staying together.

VIII. Other Accommodations

1. Care is to be taken that sleeping areas are clearly segregated between males and females. In situations where males and females share a common large room (example: a parish hall), a sufficient number of chaperones should be provided on a rotating schedule to provide constant supervision and always with two or more adults awake.
2. No minors may spend the night with a lone adult chaperone or enter the private living quarters of an adult chaperone except when the minor and adult are part of the same immediate family.
3. No minors may enter the private living quarters of any clergy or spend the night in a rectory except when part of the same immediate family as the priest or deacon and accompanied by their parents.

IX. Miscellaneous

1. Only G, PG and PG13 (when all minors are 13 and over) movies are allowed. All movies are to be screened and approved by an adult or chaperone before minors view them.

X. Adults and Chaperones—Education and Screening

1. All volunteers having regular contact with minors, all employees and all clergy will have a current criminal history background check and have received safe environment education.
2. All personnel must be educated in the “Standing Operating Procedures” in effect for the trip or event. Written materials should supplement the oral presentation. The trip leader and other supervising personnel should be clearly designated. Attendance forms should be created for personnel to sign, acknowledging that this training has been received and understood.
3. The minimum number of adult volunteers should be no less than the current minimum recommended under the insurance risk mitigation guidelines.
4. On any trip that involves an overnight stay, change of clothes, showers or for any event in which strong emotional reactions on the part of the minors can be anticipated, a higher proportion of adults to minors is recommended.
5. All adults and chaperones should lead by example, following as much as possible the same rules given to minors (for example, no alcohol consumption).

6. Adults and chaperones will refrain from smoking while in the presence of minors.
7. Adults or chaperones shall not at any time purchase questionable or illegal items for a minor (examples: cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms, and sexually-suggestive materials) and shall report the possession and/or attempt to sell these items to the trip or event leader.
8. The pastor or principal, or his or her delegate, must clear all chaperones for each individual event.
9. No adult who has been convicted of or is undergoing legal prosecution for any criminal act involving sexual misconduct with a minor is to be allowed to chaperone any minors or to serve or minister in any other capacity in the church or school.

XI. Behavior of Minors

1. All minors will be clearly instructed in the Code of Conduct and other rules pertaining to their behavior during the outing or other event.
2. When traveling out of town, emergency cards should be provided for each minor with the names of leaders, hotel name (if any), and telephone numbers, including mobile phones.

XII. Notifications

1. A clear itinerary with contact information is to be left with the pastor, principal or designee prior to departure.
2. Trip leaders and chaperones are encouraged to carry beepers or mobile phones on trips, in case of emergency.
3. A detailed list of all participants and chaperones, including the telephone numbers of chaperones, and a list of parents/guardians to be contacted in the case of emergency during the trip or event must be left with the school, parish, or agency sponsoring the trip or other event away from the parish or school.
4. After contacting the event emergency contact person, the pastor, principal or designee is to be notified immediately of any major accident or disciplinary issue that arises during the trip. The pastor or principal shall immediately notify the appropriate diocesan personnel.

XIII. Reference Documents

1. *Youth Code of Conduct* in English and Spanish
2. *Adult Code of Conduct* in English and Spanish
3. *Permission/Medical Release Form* in English and Spanish
4. *Insurance Advisory Guidelines—School Handbook*
 - a. Overnight or out-of-area activities
 - b. Transportation
 - c. Supervision of activities involving persons under 18
 - d. Driver Information Form
 - e. Field Trip – Parent Request Form
6. *Sexual Misconduct Policies*, revised March 27, 2007
7. *Parish and School Safe Environment Manual*, dated September, 2004.
8. *USCCB Film Ratings* (www.usccb.org/movies).

Note: Most forms are available on the Diocesan website, www.catholicidaho.org/PLFF.cfm