

B. Supervision of Programs with Minors.

1. On-Site Events.

- a. There shall be **at least two** EIM compliant adults supervising any program involving minors.
- b. The majority of adults supervising a program or event involving minors must be 21+ years of age (at a minimum one adult must be 21+ years of age).
- c. One adult should never be alone with one minor.
- d. If there is need for a confidential discussion, it should occur in a location that is in view of others.
- e. If there is a need for an adult to enter a restroom (e.g., to assist a young child) or locker room when minors are present, then the adult should announce their purpose and be in and out based on the situation. Another adult should be notified and be present near the entrance when possible.
- f. The following ratios use an adults-to-minors formula with the understanding that there must always be a minimum of 2 EIM compliant adults present.
 - 1) Infants: 0-11 months – 2:10; 1 additional adult for every 1-5 additional minor
 - 2) Infants 12-17 months – 2:13; 1 additional adult for every 1-6 additional minor
 - 3) Preschool 18 months-4 years – 2:16; 1 additional adult for every 1-8 additional minor
 - 4) Elementary age: PreK-5th – 2:24; 1 additional adult for every 1-12 additional minor
 - 5) Middle school age: 6-8th – 2:30; 1 additional adult for every 1-15 additional minor
 - 6) High school age: 9-12th – 2:40; 1 additional adult for every 1-20 additional minor
 - 7) In the event a religious education or youth ministry class is short-staffed (does not meet the minimum ratio), the director/coordinator of the program, or a designee, must frequently and actively monitor all such classes, or combine classes into a larger common space.
- g. Catholic school classrooms shall have at least one EIM compliant adult and the principal or designee should be actively monitoring classrooms throughout the day. As Catholic school classroom teachers typically have more training and experience supervising larger groups of students than is required of volunteers for most parish programs or events, school ratios may be greater than those stated above.
 - 1) As State licensed day care programs (with specific training and supervision standards) are monitored by the State, ratios for licensed day care facilities may be greater than those stated above. State licensed day care programs must always include a minimum of 2 EIM compliant adults supervising any one classroom, even if not required by state regulations.
- h. Minors may be released only to parents, legal guardians, or other adults designated by parents or legal guardians at the end of program or event (children may not be released to older minor siblings). When there is a question about the propriety of releasing a minor, the immediate supervisor should be contacted before releasing the child.
- i. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior of minors should be reported immediately to parents.

2. Off-Site Events.

- a. In general, ministries involving youth should avoid meeting in personal homes.
- b. Any off-site event that involves minors must be supervised by **at least two** EIM compliant adults.
- c. Co-ed events should include male and female chaperones in proportion to the minors attending.
- d. The following ratios use an adults-to-minors formula with the understanding that there must always be a minimum of 2 EIM compliant adults present.
 - 1) Elementary school age and younger: 2:12; 1 additional adult for every 1-6 additional minor
 - 2) Middle school age: 2:16; 1 additional adult for every 1-8 additional minor
 - 3) High school age: 2:20; 1 additional adult for every 1-10 additional minor
- e. A parent or legal guardian may not attend a field trip or event with their child if not EIM

compliant. If attending, they must be serving as an approved chaperone by the parish or school and must be EIM compliant.

- 1) Other children of a chaperone may not attend a field trip or event.
- f. A parish, Catholic school, or other diocesan agency should transport minors only with written permission of the children's parents or legal guardians.
- g. Parishes, Catholic schools, and other diocesan agencies should avoid the use of 15-passenger vans to transport persons.
- h. Drivers who transport minors must be at least 25 years old (proof of valid driver's license, vehicle registration and insurance must be documented at the parish or school for each driver), unless the diocese grants an exemption prior to the event.
- i. If only one adult is to be in a vehicle, there must be more than one minor present in the vehicle unless that minor is the adult's own child.
- j. When private vehicles are used to transport minors, a transportation plan should be provided to the drivers to include route, pre-arranged stops and contact information for the drivers.
 - 1) Such a plan avoids the need to caravan while in route.
 - 2) No extra stops should be made unless approved by the director of the program or the stop is out of necessity (e.g., fuel, first aid, restroom).
- k. Minors may not transport other minors to or from parish or school functions on behalf of the parish or school.
 - 1) It is recommended that minors be transported by pre-arranged group transportation for parish or school events rather than transport themselves.
 - 2) A minor who drives to a Catholic school each day should follow school safety precautions related to minors driving to school.

3. Overnight Events.

- a. When minors attend an event in which overnight lodging will occur, the details and information about the accommodations should be communicated to parents or legal guardians.
- b. A minor may not stay overnight in the private accommodations or residence of clergy, teachers, or any adult supervisor.
- c. When selecting lodging options, parishes and schools should consider those arrangements which are easily supervised.
- d. Lodging options are to be appropriate for the event and in accordance with custom and practices for such events. Typical accommodations may include hotels, retreat centers, lodges, bunk houses, or multipurpose rooms.
 - 1) Sleeping, changing, and shower areas must be clearly segregated between males and females and also clearly segregated between adults and minors.
 - 2) If different facilities are not available for proper segregation, separate times must be designated for use to achieve the required segregation.
- e. In larger lodging rooms or cabins housing many minors, chaperones may sleep, if necessary, in the room in a cot or separate bed next to the doorway. Otherwise, chaperones should sleep in a nearby space and take turns monitoring minors' quarters.
- f. Chaperones may not stay alone in the same hotel or other lodging room with a minor or minors.
 - 1) All lodging rooms should be on the same floor with the chaperones' rooms on either side of minors' rooms.
 - 2) When practical, chaperones should take turns staying awake to monitor rooms.
- g. A parent may stay in a lodging room with their own child, but not if another minor is in the same room.
- h. For inquiries concerning types of lodging and overnight accommodations, contact the diocesan EIM office.

4. Remote/Virtual Events.

- a. Diocese of Austin policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry apply to the use of telecommunication systems for remote, virtual distance learning and ministry events with minors in much the same manner as for in-person on-site, off-site and overnight ministry and events. Telecommunication between minors and Church personnel is permitted for

- legitimate ministry-related purposes and must reflect the Catholic faith and her teachings; transparency and accountability are required.
- b. For these guidelines, telecommunication refers to “communication at a distance” using phones, computer networks and the Internet for remote/virtual participation in catechetical, educational, social, and any other programs for minors sponsored or organized by any parish, Catholic school or organization in the diocese. Such technologies include video conferencing, virtual classrooms and group texts.
 - c. Although developed specifically to address ministry with minors during pandemic, these policies will apply to any remote/online ministries or events developed by the parish/school in the future.
 - d. All adults supervising any remote or virtual program involving minors must be EIM compliant, with a **minimum of two** EIM compliant adults present.
 - 1) Catholic school virtual classrooms shall have at least one EIM compliant adult, with frequent monitoring done by the principal or designee throughout the day.
 - e. The majority of adults supervising a remote or virtual program involving minors must be 21+ years of age (at a minimum one adult must be 21+ years of age).
 - f. One adult should never be alone with one minor in a remote or virtual setting; however, Catholic school teachers may meet individually with a student for educational purposes as long as a parent is present and/or the session is recorded.
 - g. The following ratios use an adults-to-minors formula with the understanding that there must always be a minimum of 2 EIM compliant adults present in remote or virtual sessions.
 - 1) Elementary age: PreK-5 th – 2:24; 1 additional adult for additional minors (1-12)
 - 2) Middle school age: 6-8 th – 2:30; 1 additional adult for additional minors (1-15)
 - 3) High school age: 9-12th – 2:40; 1 additional adult for additional minors (1-20)
 - h. Because Catholic school classroom teachers typically have more training and student supervision experience than do volunteers for most parish programs or events, school ratios may be greater than those stated above.
 - i. Video telecommunications should use a public location, or a communal location in the home, with a background clear of distracting or inappropriate items and messaging and in keeping with Catholic values.
 - j. All leaders and participants in remote or virtual sessions should be attentive of attire and wear clothing appropriate to an in- person session.
 - k. Telecommunications should use public platforms, be by invitation unique to each session/event and require admission by a program moderator (e.g. catechist, youth group leader, Scout leader).
 - l. Two-way platforms for online teaching may include, but do not require, parent attendance. In such cases, if the parent is only responsible for their student (vs serving as a co-catechist), there is no EIM requirement.
 - m. Sessions may be recorded by schools and ministry/event coordinators for auditing purposes and may not be published in any form, including any social media forums. Minors may not record sessions.
 - n. Sessions may be recorded for purposes of repeating a lesson or meeting, or for other specified reasons, and recordings may be stored for a limited, defined period of time but are not to be permanently stored. Schools or parishes recording virtual sessions that include minors should create a retention policy.
 - o. As with any use of technology, there is potential that conversations or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized persons.
 - p. The parent/legal guardian will provide signed informed consent for their student to participate in remote/online ministry or events. This consent may be proved in a parish or school-specific consent form that includes these policies and a statement of consent specific to review of policies and permission.