

Policy Regarding Youth Activities

January 2022



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

POLICY REGARDING YOUTH ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

The model for ministry is Jesus, who prepared, trained, and sent His disciples for their mission in the world. Adults working with youth in the Archdiocese of New Orleans promote active Christian discipleship and growth in Catholic identity. By our Baptism, we are called to nurture and develop the faith life of those involved in youth ministry.

In addition to communicating the Christian message to young people, Church Personnel are responsible for providing safe, sound, secure, supervised opportunities and relationships which help that message come alive.

DEFINITIONS

“Adult” (major) means any individual eighteen (18) years of age or older and includes Church Personnel and others responsible for the care or supervision of youth enrolled or participating in any youth ministry program or event.

“Youth” or “Minor” is any individual under the age of eighteen (18). Students in high school over the age of 18 enrolled in youth programs of the archdiocese, including schools, are covered under the policies of the archdiocese as a minor.

“Church Personnel” is any priest or deacon (cleric), seminarian, aspirant, deacon candidate, religious in formation, or lay faithful who serve the Archdiocese or its related entities in ministry to Minors as either clergy, employees or volunteers.

“Contact with Minors” or **“work with Minors”** includes any Church Personnel having the possibility of on-going, unsupervised contact with Minors or vulnerable adults; any Church Personnel foreseen to have more than 8 hours contact with Minors; any Church Personnel attending an over-night event.

“Supervisor” is a pastor of a parish, principal of a school, or the director of an archdiocesan office or related entity or their delegate responsible for the oversight of those who serve the Archdiocese.

“Mandated Reporter” is any Church Personnel who works with Minors in a voluntary or professional capacity. A Mandated Reporter who has cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare is endangered is required to report any abuse or neglect of a Minor to law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services immediately (Summary LA Children’s Code 603).

“Related entity” includes parishes, schools, agencies, and institutions with direct accountability to the Archbishop of New Orleans.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The following policy applies to all programs, functions and events officially sponsored by the Archdiocese of New Orleans and/or Related entities, and to Church Personnel or others given the responsibility for the care or supervision of youth enrolled or participating in any youth ministry program or event, such as on-site events, retreats and field trips.

While each agency/parish/school may have additional guidelines, expectations and Policies, the following policies are applicable to all Church Personnel who work with Minors.

A. Safe Environment Policies Regarding Conduct of Adults Working with Minors

1. All Adults must have reviewed and be in compliance with the [Archdiocesan Policy Concerning Abuse or Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults](#) (page 8) before work begins.
2. At the local parish, school or ministry level:
 - a. All Adults must complete the individual's online profile in the [Virtus Safe Environment Platform](#).
 - b. All Adults must complete Safe Environment training either online through Virtus platform or in person through the office of Safe Environment.
 - c. All Adults must submit to a criminal background check through the Virtus platform. The release to allow this check is done through the online profile outlined above.
 - d. All Adults must annually review and acknowledge the following policies on the Virtus platform:

[Archdiocesan Policy Concerning Abuse or Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults](#); [Archdiocesan Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: Code of Ethics](#); [Archdiocesan Technology Policy for Pastoral Work with Young People](#) and [Criminal Background Check Policy](#).
 - e. The certification (both the training and background check) are **good for a period of three years, for any ministry location in the archdiocese**. Records are maintained on the Virtus platform.
 - f. After three years, all Adults must be re-trained and have a new background check completed. You will be notified of the expiration dates for your Virtus renewal through your email as listed by you on the Virtus platform. It is important for you to update your contact information regularly.
3. Adults must provide Safe Environment training for young people in your youth ministry program. Because youth ministry programs do not have set rosters and consistent attendance, youth ministers are asked to offer the catechesis at least annually, and especially to young people who are not enrolled in a Catholic school. There are grade-

level-specific materials provided by the Office of Safe Environment Coordinator. (Students enrolled in Catholic schools and Parish School of Religion receive the Safe Environment training in class annually.)

4. All Adults must sign a **Field Trip Liability Waiver** for any trip/event off of the grounds of the parish/school/agency.
5. All Adults must complete and submit **Adult Medical Consent Form**. These forms are to be submitted to the Supervisor.
6. Chaperones must be over 21 years of age. Adults under the age of 21 who assist with youth programming are not chaperones.
7. Adults shall not possess, consume or use alcohol or illicit drugs during any youth programs, functions or events.
8. Adults shall not at any time purchase or distribute objectionable or questionable materials for Minors, e.g., cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, weapons, fireworks, condoms, or sexually suggestive or pornographic materials.
9. Adults must follow [Archdiocesan Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: Code of Ethics](#), refer to pages 8-12.
10. Adults are Mandated Reporters required by law to report cases of child abuse. Click here for [Mandatory Reporting](#) guidelines. The [Archdiocesan Policy Concerning Abuse or Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults](#) must be followed in all allegations of child sexual abuse, refer to pages 6 and 7. All Adults will cooperate fully and not interfere with DCFS or law enforcement investigations.

B. Forms and Insurance Requirements

1. **PERMISSION FORMS** (Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver)
 - a. Youth may not participate in an off-site event without a signed Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver. Verbal permission or consent is not acceptable.
 - b. To the extent that such programs or events are ongoing or continuous, e.g., visiting nursing homes, one consent form per year is sufficient if the event is ongoing.
 - c. Original copies of the signed consent forms must be kept in the parish/school/agency offices for at least two years.
2. **MEDICAL CONSENT FORMS**
 - a. Parishes/schools/agencies are required to have medical release forms for both adult and Youth participants. These forms have two main parts:
 - i. The permission to treat in a medical emergency; and
 - ii. The options for treatment in non-emergency situations.

- b. All information on the form must be completed, especially in the area of insurance/health carrier. Participants and adults must submit these forms before the program/event/function.
- c. In lieu of completing a medical consent form for each field trip, one completed form may be kept on file by the parish/school/agency for up to one year per individual, after which time it must be updated and renewed. Copies must be available to program leaders for Youth under their immediate supervision.

3. MEDICAL CARE

All Supervisors must make plans for emergency medical care, including:

- a. General first aid kit; and
- b. Emergency information (e.g. phone numbers and directions to hospitals nearest the off- site location, log of all passengers in vehicles, signed copies of Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver, signed copies of the Medical Consent Forms, etc.).

4. REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

When a Minor is injured, Adults have the responsibility to notify parents and/or guardians of the Minor. The necessary insurance form and accident investigation report should be filled out and filed with the Supervisor. Reports should also be filed with the Archdiocesan Risk Management Department.

5. INSURANCE

Additional insurance is required for participation in CYO Athletic Leagues and may be required for travel and other off-site events.

Supervisors must consult with the CYO office and Risk Management before planning or leading any off-site youth functions to assure appropriate insurance coverage is provided for planned off site events, functions and programs.

C. Transportation

Transportation regulations must adhere with regulations given by Risk Management for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. For clarification on these matters, contact riskmanagement@archdiocese-no.org

- 1. Commercial or Rented Vehicles.
 - a. The use of private passenger vehicles is discouraged and should be avoided if at all possible. Commercial carriers or contracted transportation are the most desirable methods to be used for trips, and whenever possible, one of these modes of transportation should be used.

- b. If COMMERCIAL carriers are used (such as, commercial airlines, trains or buses), no further information is needed.
- c. If transportation is CONTRACTED, contracts should be approved by the Supervisor in consultation with Risk Management and must include an appropriate indemnity and hold harmless agreement protecting the parish/school/agency and the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Contracted carriers must provide proof of general liability insurance with a minimum of \$1,000,000 CSL (combined Single Limit). In the event of extended intrastate or interstate travel, higher limits of \$5,000,000.00 may be required. Supervisors must consult Risk Management for such transportation.
- d. LEASED VEHICLES: If a vehicle is leased or rented to transport participants to and from the event, appropriate insurance must be obtained. Coverage can be purchased through the rental company.
- e. VANS: A 15-passenger van cannot be used in transportation for youth ministry functions.

2. Private Passenger Vehicles

- a. If a private passenger vehicle must be used, the following information MUST be supplied and be certified by the driver in question on the form, *Driver's Information Sheet*. This form must be kept on file in the parish (updated yearly or when insurance coverage or vehicle changes). Information to be included in this form:
 - i. The driver must be 21 years of age or older.
 - ii. The driver must have an adult unrelated to the driver in the vehicle at all times when Minors are present. The second adult must also be Safe Environment compliant.
 - iii. The driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no obvious incapacitating disability that could impair the driver's ability to operate the vehicle safely.
 - iv. The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and valid and current license plates.
 - v. The vehicle must be insured for the following minimum limits:
\$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence.

D. Safety/Supervision

1. Adults must ensure all youth activities are well planned, safe, secure, supervised, developmentally appropriate, and in accord with [Archdiocesan Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: Code of Ethics](#).
2. Youth activities, including overnight activities, are not to take place in private homes as part of youth ministry activities.
3. Sleeping, changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults, except for their own children, must be separate from facilities or arrangements for minors.

4. All sleeping areas (retreat, hotel, camping, etc.) must be clearly separated between males and females. There will be no coed sleeping accommodations.