

7 – ACTIVITIES INVOLVING MINORS

Overview

Adults working with youth must be familiar and comply with “The Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders” and “Liability Concerns” found in the Diocesan “Protocols for Ministry with All Minors” (<https://charlottediocese.org/documents/diocesan-protocols-ministry-minors/>) as well as the “Code of Ethics Policy of the Diocese of Charlotte” and the “Policy of the Diocese of Charlotte Concerning Ministry-Related Sexual Misconduct by Church Personnel.”

These policies are available on the Diocesan Website. Questions or concerns related to activities involving minors may be addressed to the Director of Youth Ministry.

701 Youth Programs & Field Trips

Youth group activities can be an incredible opportunity for our Youth to experience the fullness of their Catholic faith. However, youth group activities can also present a wide range of possible loss exposures. One way of limiting that exposure lies in the need to have pre-screened and Safe Environment trained adult supervision for all youth group activities and outings.

701.1 Required Forms

The Minor Participant Waiver and Release of Claim (Form 7.A) is to be used for all field trips whether they be close to home field trips that involve transportation or for overnight activities and mission trips. The Field Trip Adult Chaperone Liability Waiver (Form 7.B) is to be signed by all adults accompanying minors in a supervisory capacity on a field trip or activity. The Field Trip Driver Information Sheet (Form 7.C) is to be signed by all adult drivers transporting youths on a field trip. Please note that all volunteers and chaperone drivers must be at least 21 years of age.

702 Steps to Safe Youth Activities

It is recommended that the Diocesan Youth Ministry office be consulted for specific protocols related to Safe Youth Activities and the Protocols for Ministry with All Minors, however the following general guidelines are put forward as a resource for both leadership and volunteers to help create safe and successful youth activities.

702.1 Supervision

It is critically important that there be proper supervision of all youths during Youth activities. Make sure that the ratio between adult staff and youth is adequate and that chaperones actually chaperone. Never leave a youth alone whether it is after an event or after the youth meeting. Make sure that a chaperone or teacher remains on site until all youths are picked up.

702.2 Transportation

The Field Trip Driver Information Sheet (Form 7.C) is to be signed by all adult drivers transporting youths on a field trip. Whether the vehicle belongs to the parish/school/agency, to a volunteer, or is rented, make sure there is the recommended levels of insurance on the vehicle(s) (see chapter 9 for additional information on required levels of insurance). Do not overload the vehicles. Make sure that there are enough seat belts for every passenger in the vehicle. All drivers must be 21 years of age or older to transport youths to and from activities. Situations do arise where approved drivers for offsite activities are not available. Often, the best,

and only, solution is to have parents/guardians drop off and pick up the youth member from the activity site. Refer to “Section 9: Vehicles” of this Manual for a more detailed discussion of transportation policies and procedures.

703 Youth Trips Involving Overnight Stay

Some activities for our youth involve traveling to location located outside the city in which you reside. These trips provide a fun way to keep kids involved with the church; however, certain risk management steps should be taken to help reduce the potential for liability exposure for the church and/or school. This section is intended to be a resource for the leadership of youth trips to help you be successful and to be able to enjoy your trip as planned.

703.1 Preparing for the Trip

If possible, the designated leader should make an advance visit to the area to assist in foreseeing any potential risks that may be encountered during the trip. The safety and security of all participants should be carefully assessed. Some items to keep in mind are: Is there adequate security in place where you will be staying? Are there adequate facilities for housing all participants, including all adult chaperones? What is the distance to the nearest medical facility? What medical services are available? Are there first aid supplies readily available? Will the participants require additional vaccinations depending upon the location of the trip?

Check for any U.S. travel alerts/warnings if trip is planned outside the United States by visiting <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>. (Add

If the trip is to a non-English speaking location, arrange to have someone who speaks the language travel with you to translate.

International Mission Trips vs Pilgrimages:

- **Mission Trip (group travel)** is an activity sponsored by the Parish/Diocese where a group of clergy, employees and volunteers will perform a ministry service such as building homes or performing other services in a foreign country. **Diocesan insurance policies usually cover mission trips** (Location dependent).
- **A Pilgrimage** is an individual or group traveling to a foreign country for the purpose of touring various regions for individual benefit. **Diocesan insurance policies DO NOT cover pilgrimages.**

Prior to any International Travel, please contact Catholic Mutual Group’s Nichol Farnan, Member Services Representative, at 800-228-6108, Ext. 2362 NFarnan@catholicmutual.org to determine if any additional insurance coverage will need to be obtained. These possible costs should be planned for and factored in if applicable.

If a trip will take place outside of the United States, all participants should check with their health insurance provider to ensure their coverage will follow them. If coverage does not apply, then parents should make arrangements to acquire adequate health insurance coverage for the trip.

704 Transportation (See Also Section 9: Vehicles) ★

If individual parental transportation is not available, then using a licensed commercial carrier or contracted transportation company is the most desirable method. If commercial carriers are used (i.e., commercial airlines, trains, or buses), no further information is required. However, if transportation is contracted, signed contracts should be executed with an appropriate hold

harmless agreement protecting the parish/school/agency and the Diocese. Also, contracted carriers should provide proof of insurance with minimum limits of liability of \$2,000,000 CSL (Combined Single Limit).

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2003, NEW OR USED 11-15 PASSENGER VANS CAN NO LONGER BE PURCHASED, LEASED, OR UTILIZED FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRANSPORTING PASSENGERS BY ANY PARISH /SCHOOL/ AGENCY. The use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) are also prohibited. (Please see Chapter 9 for the Van/Bus Diocesan Policy)

If a vehicle will be leased, rented, or borrowed to transport participants, appropriate insurance must be obtained. It is the policy of the Diocese that when a parish/school/agency leases or rents a vehicle for Diocesan use that the lease agreement be made in the name of the Bishop of Charlotte and **drivers should always purchase the highest level of Collision/Loss Damage Waiver insurance and Personal Accident Insurance offered by the rental car company.** Coverage may also be available through your local insurance agent.

COVERAGE CANNOT BE AUTOMATICALLY ASSUMED FOR LEASED, RENTED, OR BORROWED VEHICLES.

If a private passenger vehicle must be used, then the following information must be supplied, and this information must be certified by the driver in question:

- The driver must be 21 years of age or older.
- The driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that could in any way impair his/her ability to drive the vehicle safely.
- The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and license plates.
- The vehicle must be insured for the following minimum limits: \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence.

The Field Trip Driver Information Sheet (Form 7.C) for each driver must be obtained prior to the trip. Each driver and/or chaperon should be given a copy of the approved itinerary including the route to be followed and a summary of responsibilities.

With the exception of commercial or contracted transportation, the daily maximum miles driven should not exceed 500 miles per vehicle. Also, the maximum number of consecutive miles driven should not exceed 250 miles per driver without at least a 30-minute break.

Forms / Releases

The following is a list of forms that contain applicable field trip risk management information. These forms are included in the Forms Glossary. Please review and use the form that meets the specifics of the activity.

For forms to be used at Diocese of Charlotte Catholic Schools, please see the website <http://schools.charlottediocese.net>.

- Minor Participant Waiver and Release of Claim Form: used for all field trips whether day trip, overnight stay, or mission trips. (Form 7.A)
- Field Trip Adult Chaperone Liability Waiver: For the adults accompanying minors in a supervisory capacity (Chaperones) on an activity (Form 7.B)
- Field Trip Driver Information Sheet (Form 7.C)