

*Diocese of Allentown
Overnight Trip Guidelines for Chaperones
Effective July 1, 2011*

Introduction

In the Diocese of Allentown, many of our schools and youth groups are involved in activities outside the immediate area, requiring an overnight stay. Steps must be taken during the planning phase, as well as during the trip, to prevent injury and liability exposure due to chaperone action, or lack thereof. This document is intended to be used by all Diocesan parishes, schools and organizations as a resource for trip leaders to plan and enjoy a successful overnight trip.

Preparing for the trip

1. If possible, the trip leader should make an advance visit to the area to determine what will work best for the group and to identify any potential risks that are evident. If a pre-visit is not possible, it may be helpful to contact other leaders who have made a trip to the area for information and suggestions.

Issues to consider:

- What security measures are in place? Is additional security needed?
 - What is the distance to the nearest medical facility and what services are available there?
 - Are language barriers a potential issue?
 - Are there specific customs or standards that may apply?
2. Confirm that facilities are adequate to house all participants in one location, including all adult chaperones.
 3. Create a plan of action to be certain that you can properly respond to an emergency.
 4. Determine if the participants must have specific documents in their possession for the trip. If so, how and when will this be conveyed to the participants allowing for the appropriate amount of time needed to obtain documents.
 5. Provide a detailed description of the trip and specific documents required to parents/ guardians before participants register.

Include the following information:

- Type of activities
- All costs
- Departure and arrival dates and times
- All modes of transportation to be used
- Information on accommodations
- Names of chaperones
- Emergency contact information

6. Determine if any additional insurance coverage will be needed. All participants should check with their health care insurer to verify their insurance will cover them. If health insurance issues are a concern, arrangements should be made to acquire adequate health insurance for the trip.
7. Arrange a MANDATORY meeting with all participants and parents/guardians to fully explain the details of the trip. Provide and review written behavior standards and require participants to sign an acknowledgment of their understanding. Discuss expected cell phone and texting guidelines between chaperones and participants.
8. Chaperone Selection
 - All chaperones must be at least 25 years of age. Assistants ranging in age from 21 to 24 are permitted to attend, but should not serve as a primary supervisor. No one less than age 21 should function in a supervisory capacity.
 - The initial ten or fewer minors need to be chaperoned by no less than two adults. For each additional one to six minors, an additional adult needs to be added. Consideration needs to be given to gender. The proportion of male and female chaperones should reflect the same proportion of minor participants.
 - All chaperones must participate in a criminal background check through HireRight, as required by the Diocese of Allentown.
 - All chaperones must attend a “Protecting God’s Children” class prior to the scheduled trip.
 - All chaperones must read and sign the Diocese of Allentown’s Code of Conduct and Sexual Abuse Policy.
 - The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that all chaperones have met the stated requirements and have completed all paperwork prior to the trip. Following the trip, the paperwork should be kept on file for a minimum period of three years.

On the trip

1. Chaperone Guidelines and Behavioral Standards

- No one-on-one contact: One-on-one contact between adults and minors is not permitted. In instances where one-on-one contact is unavoidable, it is to be conducted in full view of another adults and minors.
- Separate Accommodations: No adult is to be housed in the same room as a minor, other than the adult’s own child or ward. Separate shower and latrine facilities for males and females and separate facilities for minors and adults are encouraged. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for males and females, and separate times for minors and adults are to be scheduled.
- Respect for Privacy: All adults must respect the privacy of minors in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers, intruding only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their privacy in similar situations.
- Cameras, Imaging and Digital Devices: It is inappropriate to use any device capable to recording or transmitting visual images in showers, restrooms or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.

- No Secret Organizations: No secret organizations are permitted. All aspects of the trip are to be open for observation for all participants.
- Hazing Prohibited: Physical hazing and initiation are prohibited.
- Bullying Prohibited: Verbal, physical or other bullying is prohibited.
- Appropriate Attire: Proper clothing for activities is required. Revealing or immodest clothing is not appropriate.
- Recognize, Resist and Report: Any improper or unsafe conduct observed involving any participant should immediately be reported to the trip leader.
- Support Objectives and Guidelines: Chaperones should be familiar with and strive to achieve the objectives and guidelines of the sponsoring program.
- Uphold Authority of Leader(s): Chaperones need to uphold the authority of those responsible for leadership of the program or activity and assist them in every way possible to promote learning and full participation.
- Active Supervision and Monitoring of Minors: Keep track of minors entrusted to their care on a day-to-day basis:
 - 1) Make sure minors are awake on time.
 - 2) Review daily Itinerary
 - 3) Account for all minors on buses or at any time transportation is used.
 - 4) Make sure all minors are in their room at curfew.
- Awareness of Emergency Plans: Be aware of and adhere to emergency plans and evacuation routes at the facilities being used.
- Retain Paperwork: Keep emergency medical forms and releases for minors assigned to them.
- Chaperone to Carry a Cell Phone: Each chaperone should be encouraged to have a cell phone and have the group leader's cell phone number readily available.
- Cell Phone/Texting Guidelines: **Cell phone/texting contact between Chaperones and participants should be for supervisory, instructional and emergency purposes only. Care should be taken to maintain professionalism and appropriate boundaries in all communications.**
- Minors' Use of Internet/Cell Phones: Minors' use of internet/cell phones during youth events/trips should be limited.
- Separation of Genders in Sleeping Areas: Chaperones are expected to maintain the separation of genders in youth sleeping rooms. Check sleeping rooms periodically after curfew. If a chaperone must enter youth sleeping rooms, a second chaperone must be

present and chaperones need to be of the same gender as the youth in the room being checked.

Additional Considerations

1. The following behaviors are generally considered appropriate at youth events and activities:

- Side hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder or “temple” hugs
- Handshakes
- “High-fives” and hand slapping
- Verbal praise for a job well-done (not regarding physical attributes)
- Touching hands, faces (in context of a blessing), shoulders, and arms of minors
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with younger minors
- Sitting beside younger minors
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate

2. The following behaviors are generally considered inappropriate at youth events and activities:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces and kisses on the mouth
- Touching private areas of the body - any portion that would be covered by a bathing suit
- Going to an isolated area away from the group, or being taken to an isolated area by an adult or peer
- Showing affection in isolated areas of a facility such as bedrooms, restrooms, bathrooms, closets, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
- Being in or on a bed with a minor
- Holding children on the lap who are capable of sitting on their own
- Wrestling with or tickling minors
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by minor or adult to another minor or adult
- Any form of unwanted affection or sexual harassment
- Compliments or put downs that relate to physique or body development