



GUIDELINES FOR ALL YOUTH EVENTS INVOLVING OVERNIGHT STAY CONDUCTED OR SPONSORED BY A PARISH, SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS

(Revised June 2026)

In order to continue to comply with the U.S. Bishops' Charter and Norms for the Protection of Children, everyone in the diocese who interacts with children on a regular basis must be VIRTUS© compliant. Prior to working with Children and Youth a background check must be completed and certificate of completing a Virtus© session presented. Both background check and Virtus session must be completed every 3 years to remain compliant.

FORMS:

Parents/Guardians are to complete a **Parental/ Guardian Medical Waiver** once a year on all participants. A copy must be kept on file at the parish.

Parental/ Guardian Consent form and liability waiver is required and must be kept on file for each young person participating in an event. We understand that it will be difficult to refuse to allow someone to participate in an event, however, it is essential that these permission forms be completed and that **no one should be allowed to participate who has not completed the form.**

An **Incident Investigation Report for Injuries** form must be completed for all incident/injuries. Keep this on file at the parish. Please be sure to read each question carefully and answer all questions as completely as you can.

TRANSPORTATION:

- a) The Diocesan Vehicle Safety Policy requires that all volunteer drivers fill out the standard **Driver Information Sheet**. A digital copy must be kept for a minimum of 3 years. These forms must be updated annually. If the volunteer answers true to any of the questions on the

form, they should not be used as a driver. Drivers for youth events must be at least 21 years of age. Drivers must also provide a copy of their driver's license, as well as insurance information (see Driver Information Sheet for more information).

- b) No vehicle may be allowed to leave the parish site unless they have **a seatbelt available for each passenger.**
- c) When more than one vehicle is used to transport participants, all drivers should have a clear understanding of the location of the destination and be briefed on the area.
- d) **At least one vehicle must be equipped with a First Aid Kit.**
- e) **No unauthorized firearms** are to be carried in any vehicle at any time.

CHAPERONES:

- a) All chaperones must be **at least 21** years of age. Overnight chaperones must be **at least 25** years old.
- b) At least one of the adult chaperones for each overnight event/trip are to be **trained in First Aid**
- c) There is to be a **minimum of two adult chaperones for each event/trip**, regardless of number of youth participants. Upon meeting the two-adult requirement, there is a requirement of **one adult chaperone per eight minors**. All adult chaperones must be the same gender as the participants. If the young people are male and female, there should be a male and female adult chaperone (a married couple does not meet this requirement).
- d) The chaperones should reasonably be available and visible at all times during the events, take part in enforcing the rules, and take control of any situation that the young people are unable to handle. The adult to chaperone ratio varies depending on the risk level of activity.
- e) All adult chaperones are to refrain from alcohol consumption at any time during the trip or event.
- f) No adult will be considered as a chaperone if they have not **received completion and approval of required background check, completed required Virtus training, and read and acknowledged the Diocese of Memphis Code of Conduct.**
- g) **All chaperones must be approved** by the Pastor, School administration, or delegate of the individual event.
- h) Adult chaperones **shall not** at any time possess or **purchase questionable or illegal items** for a minor (example: smoking material, smoking paraphernalia or any smokeless tobacco)

product, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms, and sexually suggestive materials, inappropriate clothing or items).

- i) Adult leaders are to **refrain from smoking** while in the presence of minors.
- j) It is **unlawful** for an individual under the age of 21 to smoke or possess smoking material. Therefore, our young people are not allowed to smoke at our events.

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS:

- a) Adults are not to sleep **alone** with a youth/child. The only exception is when the youth is the adult's own child.
- b) Care must be taken that sleeping areas are clearly **segregated between males and females**.
- c) In situations where males and females share a **common large room** (example: a parish hall, gym), a rotation of adults is to be provided at all times for proper supervision. A sufficient number of chaperones must be available to supervise the area throughout the night.

OUTDOOR CAMPING:

- a) It is strongly recommended that tents which can accommodate large numbers be used whenever possible. This will allow for better supervision.
- b) Tents for minors must be separated by gender.
- c) In the event that outdoor camping is held without tents, there must be enough adult chaperones available so that **at least one adult remains awake throughout the night** to ensure that no youth wanders away from the campsite.
- d) **Adults are not to sleep in a tent alone with a youth**, except when the minor is the adult's own child.

HOTEL ROOMS:

- a) 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 or location in the hotel**. If possible, the chaperone rooms should be in proximity to the rooms occupied by youth, either by staggering rooms across from or next to those rooms occupied by youth. Chaperones should be in rooms closest to the elevator/exit doors.
- b) There must be enough adult chaperones available to ensure that no minor leaves their room/hotel.

- c) Adjoining rooms should be requested for youth, when possible, for better supervision. All rooms must be checked by the group leader before assigning them to groups to avoid males and females having adjoining doors.
- d) **No youth should be allowed to leave the hotel property alone.**
- e) Youth are to be informed of **safety rules and security measures** prior to the day.
- f) Chaperones are to **set a curfew and make a room check at night**. During the day, there are to be periodic group meetings to be sure that everyone is accounted for.

REPORTING ABUSE:

Anyone who obtains information of known or suspected child abuse while in performance of his/her duties for a parish, shall report said information immediately to the Tennessee Department of Child Protection (877) 237-0004. The **pastor, pastoral associate or administrator** of the parish for whom he/she is performing duties must also be notified at the time the information is obtained or, in the pastor's absence, the associate pastor of said parish, and the **diocesan director of human resources**.

EXPECTATIONS:

All movies are to be screened by an adult before they are presented to young people.
USCCB movie classifications listing should be consulted.

Any Church overnight trip must ensure that all participants fulfill their Sunday and Holy Day obligations.