

**Diocese of Manchester
Office for Ministerial Conduct
Policy Regarding Overnight Trips**

At times, schools or parishes may plan field trips for youth that involve overnight stays. Please consider the following guidelines when planning any overnight events involving minors:

1. Preplanning

a. Approval must be obtained from the pastor if this is a parish trip, or the principal if this is a school trip.

b. Written permission must be obtained from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each child who will participate in the event. The Diocesan Permission Form can be found at www.catholicnh.org/risk in the forms section.

c. Insurance may be required. You may contact the diocesan Risk Management Provider, Porter & Curtis, at 1-877-409-5655 to inquire about insurance requirements.

d. All adult chaperones must complete all safe environment requirements **prior** to the event. Refer to Section 2b of these guidelines for further information.

e. Group leaders and chaperones should review the *Serving Christ, Serving Others* Code of Ministerial Conduct, particularly the section entitled, “Standards for Working with Minors,” and the *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal* Policy for the Protection of Children prior to the trip.

f. Trip organizers should consider developing an emergency plan in advance of the overnight trip.

2. Chaperones

a. Chaperones must be 21 years of age or older.

b. When determining the number of chaperones, many factors come into play, including the age of the participants, size of the group, and location of the outing. At least two (2) chaperones are required for any trip and male and female chaperones should be in proportion to the numbers of male and female minors participating in the trip. In addition, the following adult: student ratios, which depend upon the grade level of students, must be followed:

- Grade 5 and below: 1 adult to every 5 minors;
- Grades 6 through 8: 1 adult to every 8 minors;
- Grades 9 through 12: 1 adult to every 10 minors.

Remember, you must always have at least 2 adult chaperones!

c. All adult chaperones must complete all safe environment requirements **prior** to the event, and the parish or school must provide the updated information to the Safe Environment Office. The requirements are:

- Complete the Volunteer (or Employment) Application
- Read the *Serving Christ, Serving Others* Code of Ministerial Conduct and *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal* Policy for the Protection of Children and sign the Acknowledgement Form (on paper or electronically)
- Complete (every 4 years) a New Hampshire criminal records check plus background checks for all states in which the person has resided during the past five (5) years. The results of the background check(s) must be available and on file at the Safe Environment Office before the adult is authorized to chaperone the trip.
- Complete sexual abuse awareness training¹, including refresher training every 4 years.
- The adult's name must be checked on the national sex offender registry at www.nsopw.gov

For assistance with completing the above items, you may contact your parish or school Safe Environment Coordinator or the Safe Environment Office at (603) 669-3100, extension 0149 or 0109.

3. Sleeping arrangements

a. Accommodations should be separate for males and females. This applies to minors as well as adults, unless the adults are married.

b. Adjoining rooms should be shared by minors of the same gender. If staying in a hotel, you may want to consider housing males and females on separate floors.

c. An adult may not share sleeping quarters with minors in facilities such as hotel rooms or cabins, except when absolutely necessary and when another adult is present, unless the adult is the parent or guardian of the child. In some situations (such as outdoor camping trips or other trips where accommodations may be in large, open areas), the adults may be housed in the same area, but should sleep in an area that is separate from the minors.

d. It is recommended that two (2) adults remain awake at all times for monitoring purposes. Some groups may choose to use a security firm for this purpose. However, if due to the size of the trip (i.e., a small number of chaperones), it is not possible for the adults to remain awake at all times, then the adults should sleep in strategic locations which will allow them to monitor student activity.

e. Adults should avoid being alone with a minor.

¹ *Safe Haven, Shield the Vulnerable, Protecting God's Children, or Praesidium* training

4. Showering

a. Whenever possible, males and females should use separate bathroom and shower facilities. In the event that this is not possible, separate times should be designated for male/female bathroom and shower use.

b. Whenever possible, adults and minors should use separate bathroom and shower facilities. In the event that this is not possible, separate times should be designated for adult/minor bathroom and shower use.

c. Adults should avoid showering in an area that is in close proximity to minors. Adults should never be in a questionable state of undress in the presence of minors.

5. Other Guidelines

a. The use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, and using medication not as prescribed, is prohibited for adults as well as for minors.

b. All prescription medications must be in their original containers and may only be administered to minors with signed parental permission. All medications, with the exception of epi-pens, inhalers, diabetic medications, or other medications which are medically necessary for a minor to have in his/her possession, must remain in the care of and be administered by a designated adult.²

c. Organizers are encouraged to develop additional guidelines which are specific to the needs of the parish or school trip.

For further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Diocese of Manchester

Safe Environment Office: (603) 669-3100 x 0149 or 0109

Faith Formation Office: (603) 669-3100 x 0145

Porter & Curtis- Risk Management Provider: 1-877-409-5655

² Refer to Parent Permission to Dispense Medication Form and Epi-Pen Use Form at: www.catholicnh.org/risk in the forms section.