

holic beverages, drug- or alcohol-related paraphernalia, tobacco products, tobacco-related paraphernalia and/or prescription drugs not indicated on the Permission and Release Form are forbidden. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action for:

- Any youth on parish property
- Any youth attending or participating in any youth ministry-sponsored activity
- Any youth attending or participating in any activity that may be associated in any way with the youth ministry

Disciplinary action may include dismissal from the parish youth ministry, even for a first offense. The decision as to the most appropriate consequence should be made in consultation with the pastor or supervisor and should take into consideration the law and the pastoral needs of the situation. The parent/guardian should be given information regarding counseling resources and engaged in the parish discussion of appropriate consequences related to the ministry environment.

Policy: Ministry team members and chaperones may not possess or consume drugs, alcohol or pornography at any youth ministry event/gathering. On overnights, this restriction applies around-the-clock, continuing to apply for adults during the evening hours, even after the young people have gone to sleep. Any ministry team member who violates this policy will be dismissed immediately.

Policy: Any adult who provides or assists youth in obtaining alcohol, weapons, drugs or pornography will be dismissed, and the proper authorities will be notified.

Policy: Any youth found to have drugs, alcohol, weapons or pornography in their possession, or who uses or arrives to an event/activity under the influence of drugs/alcohol, may not be allowed to remain at the event/activity and must be picked up immediately by the parent/guardian.

Policy: In keeping with our partnership with parents/guardians, the youth ministry coordinator must inform the parents/guardians of any youth who have possessed/consumed alcohol, possessed/used illegal drugs or possessed pornography or weapons at a youth ministry meeting, activity or event.

Policy: The youth ministry coordinator must inform the

pastor of any young person who has possessed/consumed alcohol, possessed/used illegal drugs or possessed pornography or weapons at a youth ministry meeting, activity or event.

Policy: Although bag checks may occur before leaving for events, allegations of possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons and/or pornography still occur. If an allegation of possession is presented, the party or parties should be approached by at least two supervising ministry team members together to determine the accuracy of the allegation. If there is a reasonable cause to believe the allegation is true, then ministry team members should request permission to search the possessions of the accused. This should always occur in the presence of at least two supervising ministry team members. It should never be done by a single adult. Ideally, it should be done by the youth ministry coordinator.

Policy: Intergenerational gatherings that are primarily youth-oriented (e.g., a high school graduation reception) should not serve alcohol.

Policy: If youth are attending an activity/event for intergenerational audiences where alcohol is available/served (e.g., parish dinner), parents/guardians of youth must be aware that alcohol will be available/served. Chaperones and event sponsors have the responsibility to ensure that no underage drinking will be allowed. Adults chaperoning youth at such events cannot consume alcohol.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND E-CIGARETTES

Policy: The use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes is not permitted by young people at any youth ministry gathering.

Policy: No one, youth or adult, is permitted to give, lend or sell tobacco or e-cigarette products to a minor. It is a violation of the law.

Policy: Adults are asked to refrain from using tobacco and nicotine products at youth ministry events. If they do use tobacco or nicotine products, they are to remove themselves from proximity of young people and use the product in a discreet, designated area.

OFF-SITE EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT TRIPS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Off-site events and overnight trips can be effective tools in youth ministry. However, they also can present unique issues in supervision and safety of young people. This is why the archdiocese is instituting a policy that young people under grade 9 cannot participate in overnight events. With this in mind, special care must be taken

when planning such events.

Policy: Parishes cannot host overnight events or trips for young people in grades below 9th grade.

Policy: Permission for parish-sponsored overnight events must be submitted for approval to the pastor at least six weeks prior to the event (see Forms).

Policy: Priority must be given during any off-site or overnight trip to ensure that all participants fulfill their

Sunday and Holy Day obligations to attend Mass.

Policy: All safe environment policies and previously mentioned supervision ratios must be followed.

Policy: Rules and expectations, along with consequences for violations, need to be presented clearly to both minors and adults at the beginning of any event.

Policy: It is absolutely forbidden to ask or require a minor to keep a secret from his/her parents/guardians or to make a vow of secrecy about what happens on a trip.

It is permissible to instruct minors to respect the privacy of their peers by not revealing personal or private information about them to other minors, but they may not be instructed to keep it from their parents/guardians.

Policy: Minors are forbidden from texting, messaging, or transmitting via any form of electronic communication or social media, any images, videos, memes, GIFs, or screenshots of anyone or anything that might cause embarrassment, humiliation or distress to the person depicted or the person on the receiving end. Additionally, no nude or semi-nude images may be sent or asked for via electronic communication or social media. NOTE: Images of minors that are sexually explicit constitute child pornography and must be reported immediately to law enforcement.

Best Practice: Create, distribute, and discuss a code of conduct (see sample in Forms) that outlines expectations for youth and adults on the trip. Have youth and parents sign and turn in with permission forms.

Policy: It is absolutely forbidden under any circumstances during a trip for minors to be physically restrained or deprived of their ordinary senses in any way (e.g., blindfolded, kept in darkness), subjected to any humiliating or demeaning treatment (e.g., any form of hazing) or deliberately frightened.

Policy: One-on-one private contact between adults and minors is not permitted. If a personal meeting is required with a minor, it must be conducted in view of other adults and minors.

Policy: An adult may not engage in any private direct electronic communication with an unrelated minor (e.g., text messaging, phone calls) unless it is necessary for safety (e.g., to contact a lost child).

Best Practice: Use an approved communication tool such as Flocknote or Remind to communicate with participants on trips. Refer to the Office of Youth Ministry website for recommended communication tools.

PARTICIPATION

Efforts should be made to ensure that all young people, regardless of physical ability, documentation status or financial situation, be able to participate in trips. It is appropriate to require young people to participate in specific activities or preparation as a requirement to partici-

pate on trips. Private health insurance is not required for participation in events.

Policy: If a parent is uncomfortable with his/her young person participating in an overnight retreat, that young person cannot be required by the parish/program to attend. If it is a “required” retreat for something like confirmation preparation or youth leadership development, arrangements will need to be made with the parents for the young person to engage in substitute experiences. For example, if a parent is uncomfortable with their teen attending a weekend confirmation retreat, the young person could have the option of participating in extra service work, personal study, adoration, etc.

PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORMS

Permission and release forms are an important way to ensure that parents/guardians are aware of and approve of the activity/program in which their minor is participating. Medical release provides supervising team members with critical information such as medical conditions, allergies and emergency contacts.

Policy: Youth participating in any off-site or overnight event must have a completed archdiocese-approved permission and release form signed by a parent/guardian.

Policy: Adult leaders need to complete and sign a medical release form.

TRANSPORTATION AND DRIVERS

The best way to transport youth is through approved, contracted carriers. An updated list of approved bus companies is available on the Office of Youth Ministry website.

Policy: Contracted carriers must fully execute a bus service contract and shall obtain and maintain commercial auto liability insurance, commercial general liability insurance and statutory workers compensation and employers’ liability insurance. The pastor must also sign this agreement. Contracted carriers must also submit a certificate of insurance (COI) with a minimum limit of commercial automobile liability insurance with a combined single limit of \$5,000,000 per occurrence. Contracted carrier must also provide commercial general liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage with a combined single limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and statutory workers compensation and employers’ liability insurance as required by New York State or any other state to which they are required to maintain workers’ compensation and employers’ liability insurance. Language on the COI for commercial automobile liability insurance and commercial general liability insurance should include as additional insured the parish, the Archdiocese of New York and His Eminence Timothy M. Cardinal Dolan. A Certificate of Insurance must also be provid-



ed for workers compensation insurance. Language on the COI should also include that excess or umbrella liability policies are primary and non-contributory insurance to any other insurance available to the additional insured with respect to claims arising hereunder.

Policy: 10- to 15-passenger vans cannot be used to transport youth.

Policy: In transporting minors, two adults should be present in each vehicle; if that is not possible, the minimum required is one adult and two or more minors. A youth may never ride in a vehicle alone with an adult other than their parent or guardian.

Policy: If private passenger vehicles are to be used, the following policies must be followed, supplied and certified by the driver.

- Driver is 21 years of age or older.
- Driver has a valid, non-probationary driver's license and the ability to drive the vehicle safely.
- Vehicle must be in safe working condition and have valid and current registration and license plates.
- Vehicle must be insured for at least \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per occurrence.

Best Practice: Do not assume a driver's personal insurance will cover liability for a youth ministry event. Always check with insurance carriers to make sure they are covered.

Best Practice: Build into the event fee the cost of transportation and reimbursement for drivers' gas.

Travel by Public Transportation

Policy: Supervising team members need to be on the same bus or in the same compartment as their young people.

INSURANCE AND ACTIVITIES

Policy: Before planning any event that may involve a higher-risk activity (e.g., swimming, skiing) contact Catholic Mutual for current guidelines regarding coverage. In cases where risk is greater due to the nature of the experience (e.g., rafting, rock climbing), supervision by professionals with appropriate training is required.

Best Practice: Trip insurance is recommended for off-site activities.

PHYSICAL SPACE AND SAFETY

Policy: Adult leaders must ensure that they are fully familiar with the safety plan for the facility (fire exits, boundaries, etc.), and must give event participants a briefing on safety plans.

Policy: Minors are not permitted to leave the location where an event is taking place except as part of a group under the direct supervision of at least one adult.

Policy: All fire codes (e.g., maximum occupancy) must be followed.

Best Practice: Visit the location before the event. Make sure you know where the emergency exits are, where there are fire extinguishers, and where the automated external defibrillator (AED) is. Look for potential hazards and discuss how to minimize them.

SLEEPING AND BATHROOM ARRANGEMENTS

Policy: There must be separate bathrooms, changing rooms, and showers for males and females.

Policy: Minors may only use the facilities that conform to their biological sex.

Policy: Male and female participants may not sleep in connecting rooms.

Policy: No minor is permitted to sleep in a bedroom with an adult except in the case of a minor sleeping in the room of their own parent or guardian.

Policy: In dormitory-style facilities, minors and adults, and males and females, must have separate areas.

Policy: Adults and minors may not change or shower in the same place at the same time.

Policy: Adults are never to share rooms/spaces with youth that accommodate fewer than six people.

Policy: A minimum of two adult chaperones may share sleeping rooms with youth in group sleeping situations where there are beds/space for six or more people (e.g., dormitory, bunk rooms, cabins, gym floor, large room). Adult beds/sleeping space should be set apart from youth and preferably near an exit.

Policy: Minors who are staying in private rooms with no adults, which would be the case when rooms accommodate fewer than six people, should be periodically checked by two adult chaperones of the same sex. Typically, this is done immediately at curfew to ensure all youth are present and in their assigned rooms.

Policy: Male and female adults may not share a private bedroom unless they are joined in a valid marriage, are

adult siblings, or are a parent with an adult child.

Best Practice: Consider planning for awake-overnight supervision by a minimum of two safe environment compliant adults who are not directly responsible for the following morning's programming.

Policy: A lone adult may never enter a shower, changing room, or bathroom being used by a minor, except in the case of an emergency to ensure safety or health, or to preserve order, such as stopping an altercation.

Policy: An adult may never be in a state of undress in the presence of any minor.

Best Practice: Set designated times for "adult only" showers.

PARTICIPATING IN RETREAT OR OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS NOT SPONSORED BY THE PARISH OR ARCHDIOCESE

Policy: It is the responsibility of the parish and the youth ministry coordinator to confirm prior to participating:

- That the sponsors and team members of the event are safe environment compliant up to the standards of the Archdiocese of New York
- That housing arrangements comply with the standards of the Archdiocese of New York.
- That the content of the event is age-appropriate and not contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

In today's world, a significant portion of our communication occurs through electronic devices. Our young people, and increasingly their parents, reside in a world where they are much more likely to read a text than a letter and find out what is happening through social media rather than through the bulletin or newspaper. These forms of communication have brought the world into our back pockets. However, they also pose some serious safe environment and copyright concerns. This section addresses not only the policies of the archdiocese but also gives guiding principles for healthy, safe and legal engagement in technology and media.

ARCHDIOCESAN POLICIES ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS, INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE

The following is an excerpt from the archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies manual. All content in this section is considered **policy**.

General Principles

In using the Internet, computers, and the various methods of electronic communication, adults who are working with minors in archdiocesan institutions and programs must maintain appropriate behavior and serve as examples of Christian conduct. They must also take care to avoid any situation or conduct that might be misinterpreted or that might be the source of scandal for themselves or others.

Definitions

The term *electronic communication* shall include, but not be limited to, telephone, cell phone, email, text messaging, instant messaging, comments posted on blogs or websites, chat rooms, social networking sites, online gaming, file transfers, Internet phone calls and Internet video or audio conferencing.

The term *indecent material* shall include, but not be limited to, sexually explicit or suggestive images or written material. The determination of whether material is