

Recommended Adult-Minor Chaperone Ratios

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a guiding principle for our interaction with youth, our primary guideline is to avoid situations where an adult is alone with children and/or youth at church activities.

Parishes must individually determine the program or activity requirements for the total number of chaperones needed based on:

- Your complete information about the activity
- The safety of the location
- The range in area that the activity covers
- The length of the trip
- The ages and abilities of the children
- The total number of children present
- Consider any limitations of chaperones present (can't swim, health condition, etc.)
- Limiting opportunity for isolated activity of any type among minors or between minors and adults
- The method of transportation
- The safety of the accommodations
- Any known or obvious dangers (high traffic area, crowded areas, high crime areas.)
- Consider safety of areas commonly targeted by sexual predators such as amusement parks and water parks. Is the area near water; near wooded or secluded areas where there is risk of a child becoming lost? Is there an increased risk of injury such as a ski trip or water rafting trip?
- Any special medical need of any individual child?

Parent participation is strongly encouraged for every activity involving children sponsored by the church. This is the best practice and the safest standard for the supervision of programs. (For school activities please make reference to the Catholic Schools Policy Handbook.)

General Recommendations for Adult-Minor Ratios:

Every event and activity must be carefully reviewed to determine the appropriate number of chaperones needed. The ratios below are a **general recommendation only**. It is the responsibility of the Pastor and program supervisors to determine the final number of chaperones required to safely manage the trip or event. As a rule of thumb, the younger the children, the greater the number of adult chaperones required. Likewise, all parents should be aware of the predetermined adult-minor ratio for every event in the Parental Permission Form.

Children Pre-K -3rd grade level: 1 Adult for every 5 Children

Children 4th -8th grade level: 1 Adult for every 8 Children

Youth 9th -12th grade level: 1 adult for every 10 Youth (Youth are considered anyone under age 18)

Please note: More chaperones are preferred and, in some situations, depending on the site of the field trip or the psychosocial make-up of the group of students, more chaperones would be required. **Two adult chaperones must be present at all times at an event, regardless of the number of children present and regardless of whether the event takes place on or off premises.**

Requirements for Chaperones

- Chaperones must be 21 years or older.
- Every chaperone must be in compliance with all Safe Environment requirements of the Diocese of Madison prior to the event.
- Every activity will have at least two chaperones. If both genders of students are present at the activity, both genders of chaperones will be present.
- If it is necessary for a chaperone and minor to meet privately, the meeting should take place within sight of another adult.

Field Trips and Outings

The written consent of parents must be obtained for every child participating in a parish field trip or outing. No student may participate unless a signed parental permission slip and indemnification agreement for the specific event is on file with the parish. The Pastor must authorize all extra-curricular activities.

Transporting Children and Youth

When planning programs for children and youth that involve travel, using buses is preferred over volunteer drivers because of the liability. However, if using volunteer drivers, these drivers must have completed all their Safe Environment requirements and ALSO have a clear driver background check. Only those individuals who have completed both requirements prior to the event may serve as drivers.

Overnight Events

All adult chaperones for overnight events with minors are required to complete the following Safe Environment requirements

- Review and Sign off online that they have been given the opportunity to review, print, and read the Diocesan policy & code of conduct documents, indicating that they agree to abide by the policies therein and acknowledging that breaking policies is grounds to not be a volunteer.
- Complete Virtus's online Safe Environment training session for adult awareness.
- Pass the Diocese of Madison criminal background check.
- If needed for driving, pass the Diocese of Madison drivers background check.

Guidelines for Overnight Trips with Young Adults

- Adult chaperones are not to be housed in the same room with minors except when the minor is the chaperone's own child.
- As an exception to the above, in a large dorm or gym situation adult chaperones may be housed in the same room with minors provided that at least 2 adult chaperones are assigned.
- There is to be no co-ed sleeping in any situation (dorm, gyms, hotel, tents, etc.)
- Adjoining rooms must only be shared by minors of the same sex and same age.
- If possible, request rooms to be reserved in the same hallway or on the same floor of a hotel.
- Minors must always be under adult supervision and have access to an adult or a means of contacting an adult during church sponsored activities. (i.e. common meeting place and time, cell phones, pagers, etc.)
- Minors must be informed of all safety rules and security measures.
- Parishes or schools have the right to add any additional rules or safety measures to this list as needed.
- The Diocese recommends a minimum of 1 adult chaperone for every 6 students on all overnight excursions.