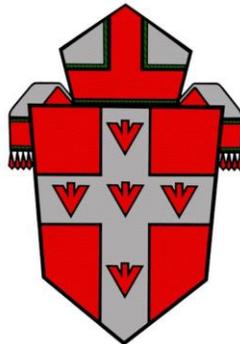


Field Trip and Travel Regulations for High School and Junior High Students in Youth Ministry, Religious Education, and Catholic School Programs

Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Go Make Disciples



Mission

Fieldtrips provide an opportunity to enrich the academic, intellectual, social, and formative experiences of young people. Students encounter new people, new learning and are offered a means to apply real world experiences to their personal, spiritual, and academic development. It is through going out into the world that we encounter the presence of Christ at work in our midst.

This handbook is designed for use in Youth Ministry, Religious Education and Catholic Schools. As you can see from the title, it is designed to address the needs of students in grades six through twelve. Although young children benefit from fieldtrips, it is our contention that overnight travel and extended experiences are to be limited to older students.

Furthermore, all adults who work with youth, whether employed by the Church or volunteering, must bear in mind their role to serve as an example of Christ's love and care. In other words, you are a catechist, one who echoes the faith. All of our actions must be prudent, unselfish and focused on the moral and spiritual formation of the young people for whom we are responsible.

Definitions

Day Trip: A day trip is an off-site excursion which requires students and catechists to leave their typical meeting place. A permission slip is required if students are going somewhere other than their typical meeting site, regardless of the length of time or duration of the trip.

Extended Trips: Extended trips are overnight and off site.

Overnight Stays: Overnight stays for young people can also occur at the ministry location at the parish or school. One example would be a lock-in. Rules for supervision and chaperoning contained in these regulations are applicable to overnight stays as well as extended trips.

Camping: Camping includes staying at a camp site overnight either in cabins, sleeping outdoors in sleeping bags, tents, or recreational vehicles.

Statement of Risk

Although extended trips are beneficial, they also present the potential for accidents and risk. More people, more travel, more time a way, equals greater potential for risk. However, clearly stated, standardized operating procedures and practices mitigate risk to young people, chaperones and persons serving in ministry.

Schools, because of their stated academic purpose, are legally required to meet a different set of educational criteria than programs which are geared toward religious education and youth ministry. Criteria for schools is clearly delineated in this manual.

Field Trip Standards

- All field trips must have a clear educational and formational purpose. Teachers in schools are required to provide the principal with a written explanation of the trip's educational and formational purpose.
- Parents and students should not be informed of the trip until it has been approved by the appropriate supervisor.
- Overnight trips involving Junior High students, (grades 6 through 8) are to be limited.
- Trips which require students to miss more than two days of school are to be scheduled during breaks, such as Fall Break, Spring Break, and summer.
- All trips involving international travel will be limited to high school students, and must have prior approval from the appropriate ministry office at the Archdiocesan level.

Responsibilities of Ministry Leaders

All events and outings, whether taking place within the boundaries of the Archdiocese or outside its boundaries, must be carefully planned. The plan (Standing Operating Procedure, or SOP) should be written. The creation of the plan (or SOP) includes:

- assessing the risks inherent in the particular event
- ensuring leadership by persons who have been screened and educated in the Safe Environment Process.
- ensuring that other adult chaperones are present in adequate numbers and are themselves appropriately trained and supervised
- avoiding isolated activity between/among minors and adults outside of a group setting. Consequently, the design of activities should discourage exclusivity between young people and between young people and adults.
- enhancing accountability, with clear consequences for failure to follow the plan
- creating channels for feedback and correction if high risk behaviors of any type are observed.

Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders

Although this document was created by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, this code of ethics should be used by all persons volunteering and working with young people in both parish and school programs.

Professional Ethical Obligations

1. Ministerial Role
 - a) Ministry leaders, work collaboratively with the pastor (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
 - b) Ministry leaders faithfully represent the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
 - c) Ministry leaders are competent and receive education and training.
 - d) Ministry leaders respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their personal form of spirituality normative.
2. Inclusion
 - a) Ministry leaders, recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
 - b) Ministry leaders, ensure that all persons have access to resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.
3. Accountability
 - a) Ministry leaders are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative under the authority of the Archbishop.
 - b) Ministry leaders are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministerial functions “ . . .conscientiously, zealously, and diligently” (Code of Canon Law)
 - c) Ministry leaders exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.
4. Confidentiality
 - a) Ministry leaders respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
 - b) Ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
 - c) Ministry leaders support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.

5. Conduct
 - a) Ministry leaders are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position.
 - b) Ministry leaders maintain appropriate professional boundaries (e.g. physical, sexual, relational, and emotional) Dating, or sexual relationships between a youth ministry leader and an adolescent are inappropriate and unethical.
 - c) Ministry leaders model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
 - d) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or other controlled substances for or with adolescents is illegal, inappropriate and unethical.
6. Referrals and Intervention
 - a) Ministry leaders are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
 - b) Ministry leaders are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
 - c) Ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse and neglect.
7. Parish/School/Diocesan Policies
 - a) Ministry leaders are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

General Employee and Volunteer Requirements

All volunteers, employees, and clergy must have a current criminal history background check, signed Code of Conduct and documentation of having received safe environment education.

- Supervision Ratios for overnight and out of town trips:
 - For High School Students, the ratio of adults to youth should be one adult per six youths.
 - For Junior High Students the ratio of adults should be one adult for every four students.
- All personnel must be educated in the “Standing Operating Procedures” in effect for the trip or event. Written materials should supplement the oral presentation. The trip leader and other supervising personnel should be clearly designated. An Attestation should be created for personnel to sign, acknowledging that this training has been received and understood.
- Adults or chaperones shall not at any time purchase questionable or illegal items for a minor (examples: cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms, and sexually-suggestive materials) and shall report the possession and/or attempt to purchase or share with youth these items to the trip or event leader.
- The pastor or principal, or his or her delegate, must approve all chaperones of each individual event.
- No adult who has been convicted of or is undergoing legal prosecution for any criminal act involving sexual misconduct with a minor is to be allowed to chaperone any minors or to serve or minister in any other capacity in the church or school.
- Avoid placing yourself in situations in which your actions are not witnessed. It is the policy to have more than one adult present before, during and after youth activities. For instance, if a volunteer needs to drive a young person home at night another adult should accompany the driver.
- There are times when privacy is necessary in talking with youth. You should meet in a public place, meeting in view of others, etc.

- Use of tobacco, including smoking, should not be done in the presence of young people.
- Use of alcohol by chaperones is not permitted during the duration of the activity either in the presence of young people or out of sight. In addition alcohol should not be consumed prior to and event or before travel.
- Abuse, intentional or unintentional, cannot be tolerated. Abuse includes physical, verbal or emotional, (humiliate, degrade, threaten), or sexual (exposure or inappropriate touching). The Archdiocesan Code of Conduct adopts the State of Oklahoma's definition of abuse. Additionally, for the purposes of the Code of Conduct, "abuse" shall include the acquisition, possession or distribution of pornographic images of a minor by any person.
- Young people of all races, religions, and cultures should be treated with equal respect and consideration.
- Positive techniques of guidance, including positive reinforcement and encouragement should be used rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
- Profanity should never be used.
- Care should be taken that any sign of affection is appropriate and cannot be misconstrued.

Interacting with Youth Requirements for Volunteers and Employees.

- When in public, let Christ shine through you. You never know when you will run into a teen. Be an example.
- Live your life according to the way Jesus calls us to live.
- Live according to the teachings of the Catholic Church in regards to marriage and morality.
- Be consistent with not only enforcing the rules, but also in following the rules.
- Confidentiality must be observed at all times regarding the teens except in case of crises including but not limited to (threat of suicide, child abuse, sexual abuse,

alcohol use, teen-age pregnancy, and drug use).

- Have another adult volunteer with you at all times. You should never be alone with a youth.
- NEVER say, act, or behave in a way that could be interpreted by anyone as a sexual advance or as sexual abuse toward any youth, regardless of the circumstances or the youth's gender.
- Never discipline in anger or with humiliations towards a youth.
- If a volunteer's behavior is in conflict with the teachings of the Church, the adult volunteer should be asked to leave.



**The Church needs
you, your
enthusiasm, your
creativity and the
joy that is so
characteristic of
you.**

- Pope Francis

Requirements for Planning Activities

Events Where Alcohol is Served

All chaperones at youth activities must refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages before and during activities where youth are present. Alcohol should never be served or consumed by chaperones at any event where young people are present. "During" means and includes the period until the youth activity, trip or event is over and the youth are no longer under the supervision of the chaperone.

Chaperones should not consume alcohol during a youth event even if the young people are not in sight. This includes private drinking in a chaperone's room and public drinking in the hotel bar or elsewhere.

Because consumption of alcohol impairs judgment and motor skills, chaperones who have been drinking place young people at risk as they are unable to react or foresee danger to children. Chaperones must always be prepared to effectively react and protect children during an activity or trip.

Movies

Caution must be taken when viewing any movies that may contain any violence or sexually explicit content. In addition to using the movie rating system, movies should be checked on the USCCB movie page for additional reviews and for the USCCB rating. Also, adults and chaperones should watch and screen movies prior to showing them to youth.

Technology

Those who minister and work in pastoral settings must take great care to be consistent in representing the values and teachings of the Catholic Church. See *Technology Guidelines* on the Archdiocesan web site <http://www.archokc.org>

Planning for Trips

Required Permissions

- All parish trips must have the approval, both for planning and implementation, of the pastor. School trips must have permission of the principal, and trips involving international travel, are to be reserved for high school students and must be approved by the appropriate Archdiocesan ministry office.
- When event leaders are brought into the Archdiocese from another area, they must be made known to the appropriate ministry office with sufficient time to determine that the individual is in good standing with his or her home diocese, religious order or parish.
- A clear itinerary with contact information is to be left with the pastor, DRE, Principal or Coordinator of Youth Ministry prior to departure.
- Trip leaders and chaperones are required to carry cell phones on trips, in case of emergency.
- The following items is required for all trips:
 - a list of all participants and chaperones, including the telephone numbers of chaperones,
 - a list of parents/guardians to be contacted in the case of emergency during the trip or event must be left with the school, parish, or agency sponsoring the trip or other event away from the parish or school.
 - when traveling out of town, emergency cards must be provided for each participant with the names of leaders, hotel name (if any), and telephone numbers, including cell phones.
- An extra insurance rider for young people traveling out of state or for a trip lasting more than one night must be purchased either by ministry or by parents.

Hotel Room Accommodations

- There is to be no co-ed sleeping in hotel rooms.
- When booking rooms, a request must be made that, if possible, all of the rooms be on the same floor in the hotel, in close proximity.
- Adjoining rooms should only be shared by minors of the same gender.
- No minor is to be allowed to leave the hotel property or use the hotel's pool, whirlpool, lobby, or exercise room without adult supervision.
- Minors must always be informed of safety rules and security measures.
- Chaperones must have room keys at all times for minors' rooms if housing pertains to a conference held in the same hotel. It is recommended that the chaperones monitor rooms periodically; however, chaperones should conduct such monitoring in pairs.

Outdoor Camping Accommodations

- Adults or chaperones are not to sleep in a tent, cabin or recreational vehicle alone with a minor, except when the minor is the adult or chaperone's own child.
- If outdoor camping is held without tents, enough chaperones must be present so that at least two chaperones remain awake throughout the night.
- There is to be no co-ed sleeping in tents, cabins, or recreational vehicles.

Sleeping and Bath Accommodations

- Adults and chaperones are not to be housed in the same small room with minors except when the minor is the child of the adult or chaperone.
- In a large dorm situation, adults of the same gender may be in a room with minors if there are at least 2 adults and at least 4 minors. Adults must have had safe environment education, a criminal history background check, and a signed Code of Conduct on file.
- Sleeping areas are to be clearly segregated between males and females. When males and females share a common large room, chaperones should be present for adequate monitoring of youth.
- Chaperones are not to use a community shower with minors, nor should a chaperone be in any state of undress except in the privacy of his or her own room.
- Clothes changing or showering by minors is not to be supervised by a lone chaperone and never by one of the opposite gender. All adults must understand that extreme caution must be exercised so that no actions, words, stares, or touches have the potential for misinterpretation.
- When minors are using toilets, adults or chaperones should not be in the same room. Should the need arise to enter the area, it should be only briefly.
- In the case of public restrooms, adult chaperones should be in the vicinity to monitor the coming and going of the students and to be available in case of emergency.
- Any necessary disciplinary actions are to be carried out after the minor has gotten properly dressed, and must take place outside of changing, washing, or toilet areas.

- Conversations with minors must always be conducted only when the minors and adults are properly dressed.

Transportation

- School trips which require travel out of state must use transportation from a commercial carrier that is licensed and bonded. Carriers must submit evidence of insurance. The company's reputation and plans for use of the transportation company must be reviewed by the appropriate diocesan office.
- Adult drivers must be 21 years of age or older (25 or older is preferred), have current driver's license, a good driving record and must have automobile insurance coverage with at least 50/100/50 coverage. It is strongly recommended that the driver has 100/300/100 coverage for protection of the driver.
- The driver must follow driving rules and regulations, posted speed limits, etc.
- Two adults must be present in vehicles except in the case of a caravan of cars with clear communication between vehicles.
- No 10-15 passenger vans may be used.
- The driver must have a commercial license, completed an application, and undergone a reference check. The reference check should include a review of the driving record. If the individual will have independent access to minors, a criminal history background check must also be done.
- All drivers must have written directions and should be familiar with the area to which they will be traveling.
- When traveling in a caravan, drivers should not digress from the agreed upon route. No side trips may occur.
- On long trips, a relief driver must be available at least every eight hours. All drivers should have adequate rest before and after travel.
- Cars, vans and buses must not exceed the passenger load. All passengers must have a seat and seatbelt (which must be buckled at all times).
- No weapons are to be carried in any vehicle at any time.

Incident Procedures

Have an Emergency Plan

Example:

Call 911

- Identify who you are and your relationship to the emergency
 - Nature of the emergency
 - Give the phone number to the phone from which you are calling
 - Do not hang up until the dispatcher indicates she is clear on the location
 - Notify parents if the victim is a minor
 - Inform your Parish/or School Leader immediately. If you are the parish or school leader, notify the Pastor immediately.
 - If necessary, inform the Archdiocese
 - When the immediate emergency has passed, write a statement covering all the facts in the incident; give a copy to your Pastor and keep a copy in your file.
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- Stay calm in an emergency. DO NOT and any time admit negligence or liability on the part of the School, Parish, or anyone from the Parish/ Archdiocese. Refer all media inquires to the Archdiocesan Communications Director.

Ms. Diane Clay

Director of Communications

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

(405) 721-1810

Report of Illness or Injury Form

(To be completed in case of illness, accident, or injury and kept on file. Accidents must be reported to the appropriate Diocesan Leader e.g. Catholic Schools, Supt. Dr. Cris Carter, Religious Education, Ms. Pat Koenig and Youth Ministry, Mrs. Nancy Housh)

Name of Participant: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Parents/Guardian's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: _____

Check all that apply: Illness _____ Accident: _____ Injury: _____

Youth Ministry/School /Parish Event: _____

Location: _____

Time/Date Parents were notified: _____

If the incident is an accident, describe the circumstances by answering the questions below. (Please attach additional pages as necessary)

What happened: What was the injury? Was the injured party treated, if so how and by whom? Were they transported by ambulance?

When did the incident occur? Include date and time.

Specifically, where did the incident occur?

Identify and witnesses (name, address, telephone number and role)

Sign and date the incident report.

Give a copy to the appropriate Diocesan leader and to the Pastor.

If the incident was an illness describe the symptoms.

Action taken (Medication, treatment, emergency room)

Who took action? _____

In Case of Abuse

Please visit the Safe Environment page:

<http://www.archokc.org>

Please read both the “Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Policy Regarding Abuse of Minors by Church Personnel” and the “Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Code of Conduct”. If you encounter a potential case of abuse, you are legally obligated to report your suspicions to the Department of Human Services. Reports should be made by calling the Department of Human Services hotline: 1-800-522-3511. All reports to DHS may be made anonymously. However, we ask that you report your suspicions to your parish or school leader.

If you suspect abuse is occurring by a parish or school employee, we ask that you In addition to contacting the Department of Human Services, that you also contact the Pastoral Response Hotline: (405) 720-9878

Requirements for New Volunteers and Employees

Please visit:

The Archdiocesan web site

<http://www.archokc.org>

Click on the “Application Procedures” link to download a PDF detailing the requirements for new volunteers and employees.