

STRENGTHENING THE CARING COMMUNITY

Overview

All youth ministry volunteers must complete high-risk screening and necessary orientation and training to ensure that they are prepared to fulfill their ministry effectively. In addition to the Volunteer Guidelines and Code of Conduct, volunteers must review the following guidelines:

- Minors and parents/guardians should sign a consent form and activity participation agreement. If the event includes any high-risk activity (ex. swimming, sporting activity), clearly define each activity in the agreement: including a description of the activity, emergency contact information, and a covenant allowing the child to participate in the event in exchange for agreeing to comply with any rules associated with the event, and indemnifying the ministry from any liability that may result from participating.
- All youth ministry retreat leaders should be 21+ years of age and have successfully completed the high-risk screening process, including the application form, criminal background check, personal reference check, in-person interview, and training. Individuals serving as Youth Ministry Helpers or Assistants may be 18–21 years old with approval from the Pastor and successful high-risk screening.
- Abiding by the Two Adult Rule: Activities should be supervised by at least two, high risk screened, unrelated adults. An adult should never be alone with minors in an enclosed space, including room checks. If someone needs an individual counseling session, it should take place only if conducted in view of another adult.
- Document all injuries. Keep Injury Accident Report forms handy and use them when needed, even if the injury seems minor.
- Seek immediate medical attention for serious injuries and illnesses, notify parents, and report accordingly.
- Handling disciplinary issues: volunteer leaders should explain the rules before the trip begins, and handle problems professionally and respectfully. If the problem is recurring or serious, contact parents and report accordingly.
- Alcohol is NOT permitted at any youth event for participants or volunteers.
- Youth should not be permitted to wander away from the group at any time unsupervised.
- All games and activities should be appropriate in terms of age and the nature of the activity.
- Youth should be directed to exercise appropriate use of cellphones to take pictures, and no pictures should be shared or posted to social media without consent of those in the pictures.
- Parents/guardians should be notified of any issues immediately and reported to the Pastor and Volunteer Screening Department.

Overnight Retreat – Additional Guidelines

- Provide a detailed schedule/itinerary of all activities to be approved by the Pastor and sent to VS for review at least 10 days prior to the scheduled event.
- Provide participants with the process should they require a chaperone's assistance, including during overnight hours designated for sleeping should there be an emergency.
- Keep roommates the same sex and similar age. Males should room with other males; females with other females. Adults should sleep in separate rooms from young people, but youth should have a way to contact chaperones quickly in case of emergency.
- Room curfew: youth should be accounted for in their designated room by 11 p.m.
- Lights out: 12 a.m. (midnight)
- Perform unannounced checks. These can be as simple as taking turns walking the halls during the night in teams of two to ensure that participants are not outside of their rooms.

Youth Ministry Volunteer Name

Youth Ministry Volunteer Signature

Parish Name, City

Date