

## Youth Events in the Diocese of Norwich

### Safe Environments Guidelines

It is the responsibility of all ministries in the Diocese of Norwich to provide safe environments for minors and their adult chaperones during diocesan, parish and school sponsored events.

Anyone attending an event in the Diocese of Norwich, who is 18 years or older, and not in high school, and where minors will be present, should be screened and trained. A Screening and Training Verification Form must accompany all registration forms. Verification forms must be received by the Office for Safe Environments two weeks prior to the scheduled event.

Adults should **pre-register** for each event. A valid government-issued picture ID will be required on the day of the event when registering. Should there be walk-ins the day of the event, those adults must also provide a valid government-issued picture ID. Their name, address and phone number must be recorded on a registration form. Since screening and training cannot be verified, they must be accompanied, at all times, by an individual with the requisite screening and training. In the event of an **overnight program**, all chaperones are to pre-register, walk-ins are not allowed.

Familiarize yourself with the Diocese of Norwich **Pastoral Code of Conduct**. Take particular note of the following points:

1. Two adults must be present when working with children or teenagers. As a rule, both must have read and agreed to abide by the *Pastoral Code of Conduct*, be aware of and know how to create and/or maintain a *safe environment* for children and adults, and have undergone *comprehensive screening*. If this is not possible, then adults should be paired so that one adult always has the *requisite commitment, training, and screening*.
2. All adults on an *overnight trip* must be screened and trained. *Chaperones* must be adults over the age of 21 years. The initial one to ten youths should be chaperoned by no less than two adults. For each additional ten youth, there must be at least one additional adult. Chaperones should be in proportion to the gender breakdown of the youth participants attending the event.
3. When more than two adults are required by the nature of an activity (e.g., dance, field trip, etc.), adults should be *paired* so that one adult always has the *requisite commitment, training, and screening*.
4. When the presence of two adults is not possible, such as medical emergencies, urgent or emergency situations, sacramental confession, or counseling and spiritual direction, *other*

*safe environment measures* should be utilized, such as *remaining visible* to another adult or assuring that the adult involved has the *requisite commitment, training and screening*.

5. Adult leaders should *know the location* of the young people confided to their care immediately before, during, and after any Church-sponsored activity.
6. When transporting children and/or teenagers, drivers are required to submit to a State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles record check, as part of their comprehensive screening. In light of this, it is strongly recommended that professional bus companies be used for transporting minors whenever possible. Policy, forms and procedures can be found in the Diocese of Norwich Comprehensive Screening Policy.
7. No Religious Education classes are to take place in private homes.
8. No parish activities are to take place in private homes unless safe environments screened and trained chaperones are present. These activities must always be supervised by a screened and trained individual.
9. *Signed parental consent forms* are a necessity when transporting young people as part of a School or Church group. Similarly, each minor must have a consent form/permission slip signed by his or her parent or guardian to participate in a youth activity.
10. Any *travel* with an unrelated child (or children) by authorized School or Church-related personnel may only occur when it is part of a School or Church-sponsored, chaperoned activity, with the express written permission of the young person's parents, when there is a second adult in the same vehicle and when diocesan transportation policies are followed.
11. *Minors ministering to or working with other minors* must be supervised by at least one adult who has the requisite commitment, training, and screening. It is strongly recommended that two adults be present during such activities and/or ministries.
12. *Touching* must be appropriate and initiated by the person being ministered to. In certain very visible situations, age-appropriate touching may be initiated by the minister, such as shaking hands before and after Mass. Otherwise unacceptable behavior does not become acceptable if it is done by a minor to an adult. The adult has the obligation to stop the behavior and counsel the minor as to the proper behavior. The adult must also report any such incident to his/her supervisor.
13. Ministers, employees, and volunteers must refrain from giving, or receiving, *expensive gifts* to, or from, young people without express parental consent.
14. *Under no circumstances* may an unrelated young person *stay overnight* in a rectory.
15. The use of *illegal drugs*, or misuse of over-the-counter or prescription drugs by Church related personnel is strictly prohibited. Church ministers, employees, or volunteers who provide, share, or offer illegal drugs, controlled substances, or alcohol, to young people

will be terminated and removed from office or ministry and must be reported to the proper civil and church authorities.

16. *Boundaries* between personal/living space and public space must be clear and maintained at all times. As a rule, personal living space in rectories is not to be used for parish/school ministries or functions involving minors and /or vulnerable individuals. No religious education classes are to take place in private homes.
17. *Proper behavioral expectations* of minors under age eighteen must be communicated to them prior to the start of the activity. Explain that encouraging and holding peers accountable for their behavior will help create a safe environment. Minors should report problems or suspicious behavior of any kind immediately to an adult. It must be made clear that they are responsible for their actions and, therefore, must think before they act. They will be held accountable for their actions.
18. *Private conversations* with young people should be considered confidential except insofar as may be necessary to fulfill diocesan and state mandated reporting requirements and/or to protect or save someone's life.
19. *Discipline* in Catholic parishes, schools and institutions should respect the dignity of each child. It is not acceptable to strike, spank, shake or slap a child. When it is necessary to discipline a child, such discipline should be *thoughtful, measured and restrained*.
20. *Visiting lay people* performing any church-sponsored function, at which minors will be present, are to be supervised by a person who is screened and trained according to diocesan safe environment policies. The parish, school, institution or ministry sponsoring the event will be responsible for assigning a screened and trained individual to the visitor. It is not necessary to inform the Office for Safe Environments, about the event, unless you wish the office to verify screening and training.
21. In the event of *visiting priests, deacons and seminarians* you must notify the Office of the Vicar for Clergy (860-887-9294) that a cleric will be visiting the diocese and for what purpose or event, as a Statement of Suitability is required.
22. There shall be no private direct *electronic communication* between an adult and a minor, except , if an adult is serving as a chaperone on a trip sponsored by or connected with a parish/school/institution, then the adult may have direct electronic communication with a minor to the extent that it is necessary for safety or maintaining order (e.g., a telephone call or text message to a minor who has become separated from the group).Only matters relating to the activity are to be communicated, and such communications must be immediately terminated when the trip is concluded or such communications are no longer necessary. In all such communication with minors, a proper professional relationship must be maintained at all times.

23. Adults are permitted to have *e-mail communications* with a minor through an official email account of a parish/school/institution, provided that the account is subject to monitoring and oversight by a supervisor, only matters relating to the official Diocesan activity are communicated, and a proper professional relationship is maintained at all times.
24. Abide by the Diocese of Norwich Electronic Communications, Internet and Computer Use Policy.
25. *Strive to live lives of truth, holiness, and virtue*, treating all human beings as human persons and not as objects for gratification, power, or advancement.

**REVISED: March 2015**

**Diocese of Norwich Youth Events**  
**Safe Environments Verification Form**  
**for Overnight Events**

Each adult listed below must be background checked and trained in accordance with the policies of the Diocese of Norwich under the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. I understand that no adult (anyone 18 years and older, and not in high school) will be permitted to be present at any overnight event that has not been cleared by the Diocese of Norwich Office for Safe Environments and is listed on this declaration.

**Please print clearly**

Parish/School/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing this form & phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail/Phone # of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Scheduled Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted to OSE: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Adult Volunteers:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**A diocesan representative will verify names before you are allowed entry to the event. Please bring a valid government –issued picture ID.**

**This form must be received by OSE two weeks prior to the scheduled event.**  
**Return: OSE 199 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360 –or- fax 860-848-2816-or-[OSE@norwichdiocese.net](mailto:OSE@norwichdiocese.net)**

**Diocese of Norwich Youth Events**

**Safe Environments Verification Form**

**One Day Events**

Each adult chaperone (anyone 18 years and older, and not in high school) must be listed below. OSE will confirm background screening and training in accordance with the policies of the Diocese of Norwich under the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. If an adult is not screened and trained (day events only), then adults must be paired so that one adult always has the requisite screening and training.

**Please print clearly**

Parish/School/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing this form & phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail/Phone # of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Scheduled Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted to OSE: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Adult Volunteers:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**A diocesan representative will verify names before you are allowed entry to the event. Please bring a valid government –issued picture ID.**

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