

Chaperone Agreement, Diocese of Shreveport

The purpose of this chaperone agreement is to ensure safety for and with the young people we will be supervising. All experiences can and will be more enjoyable for everyone when presented and fulfilled in a safe, loving and Christ-like environment. All guidelines are to protect the children, youth, adults, church parish, school and Diocese of Shreveport from injury or lawsuits as a result of negligence. All guidelines also highlight the wisdom and importance of exercising at all times the greatest concern for the health and safety of the youth that are in the supervised care of the Church/School.

The Diocese of Shreveport requires all those who plan and facilitate events for youth in Church/school ministry programs to carefully maintain and monitor their safety and health both on and off church properly,

Adults who act as chaperones for any youth event are required to read the Diocesan Policy Concerning Abuse or Neglect of Minors and take "Protecting God's Children", and stay up to date on their bulletins from **Virtus** as required by the Diocese. They are required to complete and sign the Louisiana Child Protection Act - Compliance Form (Form #8), and a volunteer application, as well as this document and submit it for filing in the church/school/diocesan office prior to involvement.

Adult chaperones for youth ministry events/activities/programs must be 21 years of age or older. Young adults under 21 years of age who assist in youth ministry are not considered chaperones. No adult is to be considered as a chaperone for any youth activity until he/she has been registered with the church parish/mission/school for a minimum of six months. No adult who has been convicted of or is undergoing legal prosecution for any criminal act or misconduct is allowed to chaperone minors.

The ratio of adults to youth is a minimum of one adult to six youth for trips or events off church/school grounds. Some activities may require a higher ratio of adults to youth. All adults need to complete and sign an Adult Travel Release Form #3 for any trip or event off the grounds of the church parish/school. At least two chaperones, one of each gender, should be available when participants of both genders are present. This applies to activities both on and off church/school grounds.

Adult chaperones need to know the schedule for the activities of an event on or off church/school grounds and be given specific responsibilities during the event. Adult chaperones will not consume alcohol or carry weapons during any youth function or any part of a trip where young people are in their care. Adult chaperones will not smoke or use tobacco products during any youth function or any part of a trip where young people are in their care. Adult chaperones will not at any time purchase questionable or illegal items for a minor, e.g., cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms, and sexually suggestive materials, clothing or other items. Chaperones will not encourage or otherwise aid young people in doing or having any practical jokes of any kind. Chaperones will not allow any misconduct or any action that could result in injury or harm to themselves, the youth in their care or any other person.

Adult chaperones are encouraged to bring pagers or cellular phones on trips for use in case of an emergency. The chaperone in charge is required to have the numbers of all cell phones and pagers for all chaperones in the event of an emergency.

Adult chaperones shall treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration. Adult chaperones shall use positive reinforcement with children and youth rather than criticism, competition, or comparison. Adult chaperones must not pose any health risk to children and youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations). Adult chaperones will not use lewd or profane language in the presence of young people or while young people are in their care.

Specific expectations of behavior that are required during events both on and off church property are to be clearly communicated to youth. Procedures for handling violations of these expectations should be communicated also. Behavior that is out of control needs to be stopped immediately to prevent it from spreading. Controlled action

should always be used to restrain an out-of-control young person. Physical or verbal abuse of any kind is never justified. Attention is to be given so that young people do not leave early or disappear for periods of time during any gathering. Adults must not use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and youth.

Whenever youth are gathered, it is necessary to be aware of and prepared for several medical situations that could arise such as, fainting, seizures, choking, cuts and bruises, burns, sprains, asthma attacks, injuries to bones, eyes, head, neck, and spine. The information of a basic first aid course is to be followed, according to parental agreement, for on-site common care or until professional medical assistance arrives. Parents and ministry supervisors are to be notified as soon as called for by a medical need. A trip to an emergency room requires a prompt call to parents. Such notification and calls are to be made by the youth minister/teacher or adult in charge only.

Suspected possession, use, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or pornographic material at a church/school-sponsored event must be confronted and investigated. The accused party or parties are to be suspended immediately from future activities. Reasonable cause is sufficient to search youth or their possessions. The person in charge only should conduct a search. Personal search requires "more" cause than searching possessions and should be conducted only when another adult is present. A personal search is to be conducted by a member of the same gender.

Louisiana State law requires anyone that works with youth to report suspected or reported cases of child abuse and/or neglect mandates persons who work with minors. Chaperones should report these suspicions to the church/school parish youth minister or to the pastor who will make the report to the necessary agency. Confidentiality is not binding in cases of abuse and/or neglect told to an adult.

Every precaution must be exercised by all adults who work with youth that no allegations of sexual misconduct could ever be reported against any adult engaged in youth ministry. All adults must understand that extreme caution must be exercised at these times so that no actions, words, stares, or touches have the potential for misinterpretation.

Rooms are to be designated boy and girl specific with clear distinction. Youth are not permitted to enter the room of a youth of the opposite sex at any time for any reason. This includes siblings of the opposite sex that may be on the trip.

The group leader must check all rooms before assigning them to avoid males and females having adjoining doors. No minor is to be allowed to leave the hotel without adult supervision. Rooms should not have HBO or other cable channels that show questionable programming. Phone service should be "restricted" to calls to parents. Pranks or phone calls to other guests are prohibited.

Chaperones must ensure minors are always being informed and reminded of safety rules and security measures. Chaperones must hold the room keys for the room of minors at all times. It is recommended that chaperones monitor the rooms periodically. Minors must never be allowed access to the hotel rooms unsupervised.

Adults are to sleep alone. They may never share a bed with a minor unless it is the adult's own child and the same gender.

Participation by a minor in a planned event that takes place off church property can be allowed Only with a signed Event Permission and Medical Information form (Youth) (Form #1). Completed and signed forms are to be submitted to the adult in charge of the event. They will remain on file in the church/school/diocesan office for at least one year from the date of the event. Copies of these forms are to accompany the group on the trip.

Each event is to be monitored and maintained so as to ensure the safety and health of each youth and adult who participates.

Chaperone Agreement Acknowledgement of Receipt

I _____ acknowledge having received and read the chaperone Agreement of the Diocese of Shreveport above and will abide by the policies and procedures contained above and understand I am doing so for the health and welfare of the children/youth in my care. I also understand that if I am found violating any of these policies, I assume all liability and responsibility and may be requested to relinquish my duties.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Name of Church you attend: _____

NOTE: Parish Leader, please keep this acknowledgement of Receipt of the Chaperone Guidelines and give the actual chaperone guidelines to the chaperone that has just signed this form. They will be able to refer back to the guidelines as needed.