

ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

(DIOCESAN/DIOCESAN-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH)



The Catholic Diocese of Evansville, through its Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (OYAYA), provides opportunities for the young Church to meet Jesus Christ, grow their relationship with Him, answer His call to ministry and service, meet and grow friendships with other disciples of Christ, and learn about the mission and teaching of the Catholic Church. These opportunities occur through a variety of events and settings, and each requires that specific rules and regulations be followed; however, informed by the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, certain over-arching rules of conduct must be followed by all participants of any diocesan event. The following Code of Conduct is not exhaustive, and it may be changed and updated as the need arises.

Adults attending diocesan events are responsible to execute reasonable action to ensure the safety of anyone under their care. In order to ensure that each participant has equal access to safety and enjoyment, the following polices must be observed and followed by adults attending, chaperoning, or otherwise participating in any youth and/or young adult events of the Catholic Diocese of Evansville:

Respect, Courtesy, and Consideration: Adults are expected to perform duties in a manner consistent with the mission of the Universal Church and the Church Particular of the Diocese of Evansville.

Relational Boundaries: Adults may be “friends” with minors to whom they minister; however, adults are *never* peers with youth. Appropriate, healthy boundaries must always be maintained and preserved in ministry with youth.

Two-Deep Leadership: According the Child Protection Policy of the Diocese of Evansville, at least two supervising adults must be present while ministering to youth. Two adult leaders, or one approved leader and a parent of a participant, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all diocesan sponsored youth activities. One-on-one contact between adults and youth is not permitted; however, it is permissible to conduct meetings in a public area (with others present) or in a visible area such as an office with an interior window or an open door so that another person can be present outside the room as a witness.

Appropriate Physical and Emotional Boundaries: Any physical contact between an adult and a minor child must be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor, not the supervisory adult. It is never permissible for an adult to make genital contact with a minor, nor may an adult lift or carry a minor due to the possibility for inappropriate contact. Sexual contact between an adult and a minor is never permissible.

Report Suspected Abuse: According to Indiana law, the failure to report suspected abuse of a minor child is a Class D Felony. Reporting suspected abuse to Church personnel does not satisfy the requirement of Indiana law: A report must be made to civil authorities immediately upon suspicion.

Initials:

Cooperation in Investigations of Abuse: Adults attending or participating in an event where an allegation of abuse has been made are required to offer full cooperation in any resulting investigation.

Available and Visible: Adults attending or participating in diocesan events are required to be available and visible for the duration of the event. Adults are responsible for enforcing rules, and taking control of any situation which participating minors are unable to safely control themselves. This includes all youth participants, not merely those in the adult's group. Adults are required to enforce the Diocesan Youth Code of Conduct and Adult Code of Conduct and to set a good moral example. Adults attending or participating in diocesan events are required to notify the appropriate supervisor/coordinator of any violations of the codes.

Care for Personal Property: If someone breaks or damages the property of another, it is the responsibility of the witnessing adult to report this to an authorized diocesan representative. Each school/parish/program assumes full responsibility for any damage done by their members at a program site/event. It is the responsibility of the Youth Minister or adult chaperones to make sure their youth are aware of this assumption of risk.

Use of Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Equipment: Cell phones, pagers, iPods (or other personal music device), personal/tablet computers, handheld games, etc. are to be turned off or be set to silent and/or vibrate modes during liturgy, prayer, talks, and/or any other activity where such devices may distract participants. Multiple violations of this article will result in an adult surrendering their phone/electronic device during the remainder of the youth event. Failure to do so will result in the adult being dismissed from the event. The adult will assume all transportation and hotel costs resulting from this dismissal, and, further, they will reimburse the Diocese of Evansville for any charges, penalties, or expenses resulting there from.

Respect for the Rights of Others: Adults attending or participating in diocesan events are expected to be cooperative and to act in a manner that will promote a good reputation for the program, school, parish, and/or diocese. Behavior must seek to be in accordance with the moral teaching of the Church.

Report Violations of the Codes of Conduct: Upon becoming aware of any violation of either the Youth Code of Conduct or the Adult Code of Conduct, adults attending or participating in any diocesan event are required to report the violations to the appointed official of the Diocese of Evansville. Locating and reporting violations is the full responsibility of all adult participants/attendees.

Prohibition of Personal Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not use, possess, or be under the influence of, any alcoholic beverage or any illegal drug. It is a violation of this policy to consume alcoholic beverages over the course of any youth event, even when youth are not present (e.g., visiting a hotel bar after youth have gone to their rooms for the evening, etc.). In addition, adults are prohibited, while acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone,

Youth Minister, or volunteer, from using any legal or illegal drug that may negatively alter their mood or impair their ability to fulfill their duties in either ordinary or emergency situations. Failure to observe this policy will result in the adult being dismissed from the event. The adult will assume all transportation and hotel costs resulting from this dismissal, and, further, they will reimburse the Diocese of Evansville for any charges, penalties, or expenses resulting there from.

Prohibition of the Possession of Firearms or Weapons: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not have in their possession any weapon, whether or not said adult holds a legal permit to do so. The above prohibition applies, but is not limited to, the following: Guns, knives, “Mace” (or any variety of impairment spray), “Taser” (or any variety of “stun” weapon), or any weapon used for personal protection purposes. Active law enforcement officers who are required by law to carry a weapon may be exempt from this provision provided they have notified the Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to attending the event. Those authorized law enforcement officers must guarantee that the weapon will be secured against access by another person at all times during the event.

Prohibition Against the Allowance of Illegal Activity of Minors: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not allow any minor to use any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or illegal drugs. Neither will adults provide anything prohibited by law to anyone in their care. Medications of any kind may be administered to minors only with written parental/guardian permission, and these medications must be disclosed on the Diocesan Waiver/Permission Form prior to the event. Adults may not administer any drug to minors, including over-the-counter medicines (e.g., pain killers, allergy medicines, etc.).

Prohibition of Sexually Explicit or Morally Inappropriate Materials: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not possess any sexually-explicit or morally objectionable material. Such materials include, but are not limited to: Magazines, videos, films, recordings (audio or video), computer software, computer games, or printed material. Further, adults will not engage with minors in topics of conversation or discussion, vocabulary or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not reasonably be used in the presence of parents or other responsible adults. Sexually oriented conversations with anyone, except in the context of sharing the Church’s teaching on human sexuality, are prohibited.

Gifts: Adults known to minors only through a ministerial relationship will not accept expensive gifts from minors or their parent/guardian without prior written approval from the pastor, youth minister, diocesan director, or authorized diocesan representative. Neither will adults give expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parent/guardian and the pastor or administrator. Small gifts or privileges are not to be given to minors without the presumed knowledge and permission of a parent/guardian.

Initials:

Deprecatory Language: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not speak to minors in a way that is, or could be construed by an observer, as derogatory, demeaning, vulgar, profane, or humiliating.

Discipline: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not use physical discipline for the behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable, including physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior except as may be needed to restrain a minor from inflicting harm on themselves or others.

Limitations on Overnight Accommodations: While acting as a participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, or volunteer, adults may not share private, overnight accommodations with minors (with the exception of blood relatives). This includes, but is not limited to, accommodations in any Church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision present. The Diocese of Evansville prohibits youth and adults from sharing overnight accommodations unless they are blood relatives and a letter of permission has been provided to the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at least seven (7) days prior to the diocesan event/trip.

As a(n) participant, attendee, chaperone, Youth Minister, employee, or volunteer of the Church, I promise to strictly follow the rules in this Adult Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the minors of the Diocese of Evansville. I understand that any illegal behavior may involve the notification of legal authorities, and the Catholic Diocese of Evansville and its representatives, assignees, volunteers, and/or employees will participate fully with any legal investigation. I understand that any serious violation of this Code of Conduct may result in my termination of employment, removal as a volunteer, and/or dismissal from a program, and/or financial and physical responsibility for transportation home (in the case of an off-site event), hotel accommodations, fees, penalties, or charges incurred by the Diocese of Evansville as a result of these actions.

Printed Name of Adult: _____

Signature of Adult: _____

Date: _____