

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE YOUTH EVENTS "SAFE SANCTUARIES" PROCEDURES

The following procedures govern issues of Staffing, Housing, Medical Safety, Security, Conduct, Supervision, and Travel at Western North Carolina Conference Youth Events:

Staffing:

- Adult and youth volunteer staff will be required to complete a volunteer application that will include at least two references (their pastor and/or adult youth coordinator at their church; plus one other adult).
- Adult and youth volunteer staff will be required to complete a medical / insurance / behavior information form. These forms will be accessible during the event in case of accident, illness, or other emergency.
- All youth staff under the age of eighteen (18) will be required to have written permission to participate from their parents.
- Adult volunteer staff will be required to complete a permission form for background checks on criminal and DMV records.
- References will be contacted and background checks will be done by the Office of Youth Ministries. Information obtained will be kept in a locked cabinet at the WNC Conference Office. It will be updated every 3-5 years.
- Churches must supply adult counselors for all their youth at every Conference Youth Event, with the exception of Choose2Share Christ and Exploration where no adult counselors from the churches are needed. No volunteer staff will be used as counselors/chaperones for youth from local churches other than from their own church.
- There will be a training session for all staff before each event at which time the "Safe Sanctuary" policy and procedures will be covered. Failure to comply with the "Safe Sanctuary" procedures may result in that staff person being sent home at their own expense, and not being allowed to serve on staff at other conference youth events.

Housing:

- When possible, youth (ages 11-18) will be housed separately from adults.
- No youth shall be housed alone with an adult. There will be a minimum of three persons when youth and adults are housed in the same room.
- No youth and adult shall share a bed. In some instances, we use motel-style accommodations with two double beds per room. The youth will share one bed; the adult(s) the other bed.
- Co-ed rooming is not permitted (except married couples and family units).
- Where possible, middle high youth and senior high youth will be housed separately.
- All event participants and staff will adhere to the established curfew and covenant.
- Participants from churches and event staff will be housed separately.

Medical:

- Each youth and adult attendee, including all staff, must submit a completed medical / insurance form. Minor's forms must have parent's original signature.
- Group leaders should have a photocopy of all these medical forms in a file during travel to and from the event.
- Medical forms will be kept on site for the duration of the event.
- Licensed, certified medical staff will be available on site (i.e. E.M.T., nurse, doctor, first responder).
- First aid supplies will be available on site.
- Counselors will be informed at registration and in counselors' meetings where First Aid personnel can be found.
- The Conference medical insurance coverage is supplemental, and does not cover snow or extreme sports.
- Churches sending youth and adults to conference youth events must have adequate insurance coverage comprehensive from the time the church van leaves the parking lot, throughout the weekend, and until the safe return at the conclusion of the weekend. The church's insurance policy should have coverage for abuse situations.
- A written report will be completed in the case of any accident, medical emergency, or injury. Forms will be supplied to the medical staff at each event. They will be kept on file at the WNC Conference Office. Some facilities also require an accident form to be completed.

Security:

- There will be security staff available at each youth event.
- Security staff will be easily identifiable by their shirts or badges.
- Counselors will be informed at registration and in counselor's meetings where First Aid personnel can be found.
- In the event of an incident, a detailed written report will be completed and kept on file.

Conduct:

- Anything considered illegal under civil law and criminal law in North Carolina is illegal for participants at a Western North Carolina Conference youth event. This includes issues related to tobacco use; drug use; alcohol consumption; possession of firearms, weapons or fireworks.
- Visitation between males and females in hotel rooms or residence halls is prohibited unless directly supervised in a group setting by the group's responsible adult for devotional or group discussion times.
- Participants are to treat others as they would want to be treated to encourage positive nurturing relationships with the whole group without the use of profane language; without practical jokes that may be physically harmful; without any two youth, or one youth and one adult, separating themselves from the group in isolated locations; without inappropriate demonstrations of affection and physical contact.

- For ALL adult counselors and ALL staff, a good rule of thumb for appropriate demonstrations of affection or physical contact would be to never be alone with a youth; never initiate a hug; keep hugs brief; always be the one to end a hug; hug from the side; never impose your touches on the youth in your group.
- Clothing for all is expected to be modest and appropriate for a Christian event or the local school dress code. Bathing suits for females must be modest one-piece or tankini styles. Two-piece bathing suits are prohibited.
- Youth and adult participants, and all staff, will be expected to observe all policies, guidelines, and covenant of the event. This also includes host facility's rules and regulations.
- Local and host facility curfews will be enforced.

Supervision:

- **Each church will be responsible for bringing their own adult counselors. In compliance with the Annual Conference mandate that each church shall have a Safe Sanctuary policy and procedures in place by December 31, 2005, this will include performance of criminal background checks on all adult supervisor / counselors coming from your church (pastors, parents, and adult youth workers), as well as the required questionnaires and information on file at the church for each adult supervisor, plus appropriate training and team teaching for each adult."**
- **Adult counselors from the local churches are responsible for their youth at ALL TIMES.**
- Parents of the youth attending an event should be given in advance of the event, written details about the event including a phone number to reach their child in an emergency.
- All adult counselors must be over the age of twenty-one.
- On weekend retreats where the Conference arranges housing, each church may bring only one adult counselor for every five youth of the same gender. There should be no more than seven youth under the supervision of one adult."
- Male youth will require a male adult counselor. Female youth will require a female adult counselor.
- **We require a minimum three-person rule at all times**, preferably two unrelated adults when there is a youth present. All counseling sessions and small groups will include at least three persons and must be held in locations that are not isolated, including alone in a vehicle. Should an adult find themselves alone with a youth, they should make certain that they are in a location where they can be seen, not in an isolated location. The door should be left open and physical contact must be avoided.
- Youth (ages 11-18) who serve on the staff of a youth event will be supervised by an adult during the event.

Travel:

- Travel arrangements for youth from local churches will be made by the adult counselors / youth coordinators from their church or by their parents.
- Travel for youth staff or youth going to Conference Council on Youth Ministries meetings should follow these guidelines. They may travel with adult staff or CCYM adults with written permission from their parents. Every effort to maintain the "three-person rule at all times" should be followed.
- Churches are responsible for screening all their adult drivers through the NC State DMV.
- Adult leaders must have parental permission forms on file for each youth to travel with the church group. These forms should include emergency contact numbers during the weekend for the youth's parents or legal guardians.
- No youth should travel alone in a vehicle with only one adult unless it is their parent.
- Youth (including youth staff) may not leave the site of the youth event without explicit permission from the church group leader or designated adult staff.
- **ALL vehicles should remain parked throughout the weekend** (church groups and staff).

Reporting In Cases of Abuse:

Any suspected or reported case of neglect or abuse that occurs during a Western North Carolina Conference Youth Event should be reported IMMEDIATELY to three persons: the Conference Director of Youth Ministries, the adult design team chairperson, AND the youth coordinator from the local church. In the event that any of those persons is implicated, the head of Security or the EMT on duty must be notified immediately. One of those persons should contact the pastor from the local church and the manager of the facility being used as soon as possible. Should the incident involve a clergy person, that person's District Superintendent must be notified within twenty-four hours.

The Conference Director of Youth Ministries, in conjunction with the adult design team chairperson, and the youth coordinator from the local church, must immediately have an incident report filled out with all available details. (Report forms to be supplied) A decision will be made by the Conference Director of Youth Ministries and the adult design team chairperson as to the appropriate action to be taken. In no event shall any of the above fail to report substantial abuse or neglect, or infractions of civil or criminal law which necessitates reporting to the proper law enforcement or social service agency as required by North Carolina law.