

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH MINISTERS

Diocese of Amarillo

(Adopted 2010)

The guidelines stated are meant to answer general questions for youth ministers pertaining to proper care of minors. Appropriate conduct and procedures are not limited to what is contained in this packet. Information may vary depending on particular circumstances. For further details or proper procedures with youth, please refer to the Diocese of Amarillo Safe Environment Policy Handbook. For a Handbook, contact your parish or call the Safe Environment Office at 806-383-2243 or download at www.amarillodiocese.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Diocesan Cluster Formation.....	3
Parish Youth Ministry Sample Information Flow Chart.....	4
Policy & Procedures	
Diocesan Policies and Procedures.....	5
(Attendance, water safety, fundraising etc.)	
Medical Emergency.....	10
Physical Abuse and Neglect.....	12
Suicide Awareness.....	13
Drug and Alcohol.....	14
Possession of Weapons.....	15
Internet/Media	16
SAMPLE {Parish Crisis Plan}.....	17
International, National and Regional Events.....	20
Diocesan Events.....	22
Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders.....	24
Diocesan Vehicle Safety Policy.....	26
Forms Overview.....	29
Forms	
Transportation Forms “B”, “C” and “D”.....	31
Parish Forms “A” & “B”	35
Youth Forms “E”, “F” and “I” (English and Spanish).....	38
Adult Forms “C” (English and Spanish).....	48
Incident Report.....	52
Referral Services.....	54
Acknowledgments & Diocesan Information.....	55

Diocese of Amarillo
Cluster Formation

South Deanery

A.
Hereford – St. Anthony’s
Hereford – San Jose
Bovina
Dimmitt
Friona
Nazareth
Umbarger

B.
Tulia
Happy
Hart
Kress
Quitaque
Silverton
Turkey

Central Deanery

A.
St. Laurence Cathedral
Our Lady of Vietnam
St. Francis
St. Hyacinth’s
St. Martin de Porres
Immaculate Conception Vega

B.
Blessed Sacrament
Our Lady of Guadalupe
St. Joseph’s
St. Mary’s
St. Thomas the Apostle
St. Ann’s – Canyon

East Deanery

A.
Clarendon
Groom
Pampa
Panhandle
White Deer

B.
Canadian
Childress
Memphis
Shamrock
Wellington
Wheeler

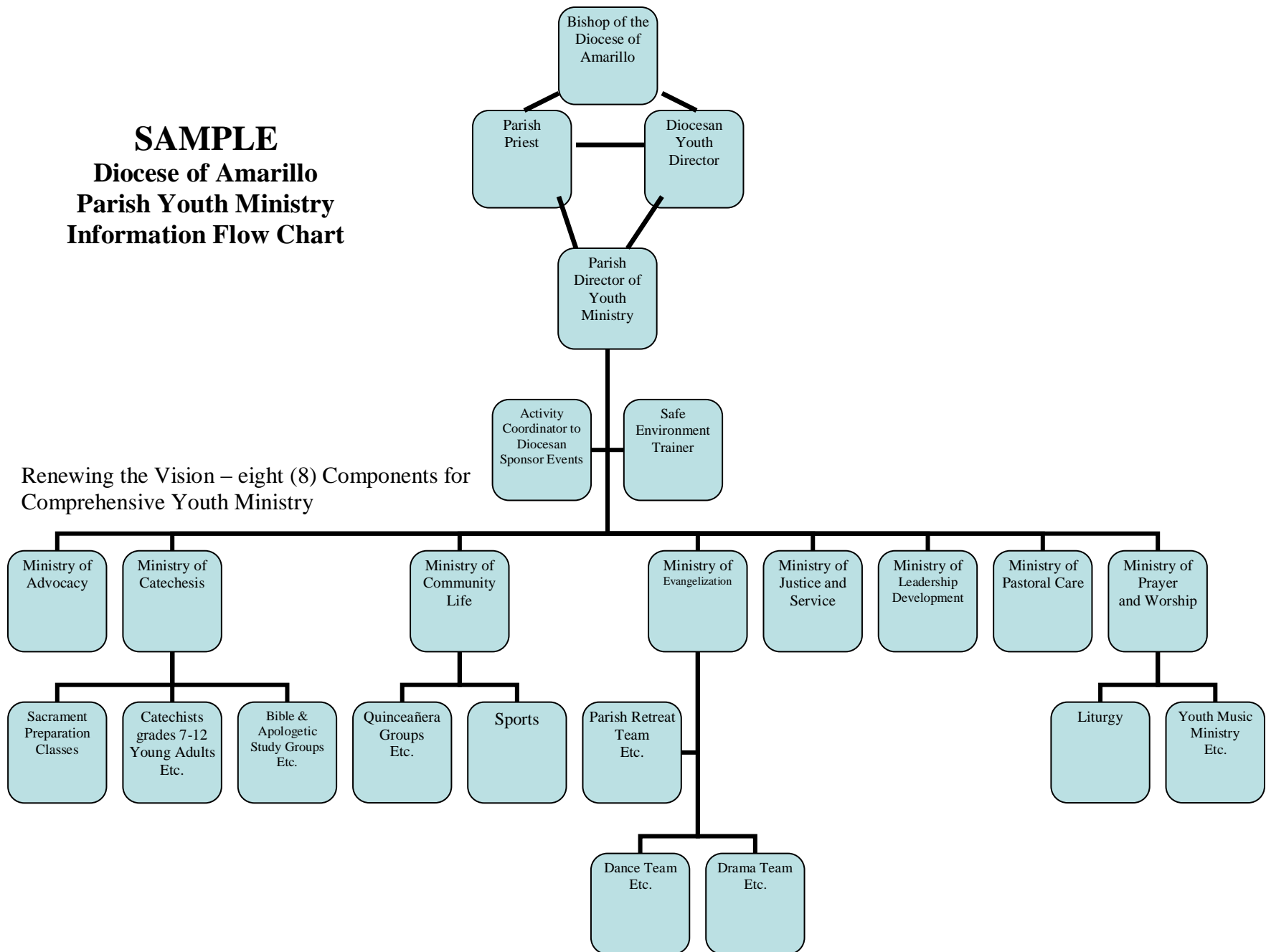
North Deanery

A.
Cactus
Dalhart
Dumas
Stratford
Sunray
Texline

B.
Booker
Borger
Gruver
Perryton
Spearman
Stinnett

The **Dark Print Parish** is the meeting center for that cluster

SAMPLE
Diocese of Amarillo
Parish Youth Ministry
Information Flow Chart



Renewing the Vision – eight (8) Components for Comprehensive Youth Ministry

DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Indicates Policies
- Indicates Procedures

The following safety policies are designed to help ensure your youth ministry programs are creative and enjoyable while providing safe and caring environment.

Office of Youth Ministry policies require that Church personnel, paid or volunteer, clearly communicate at all times with youth and their parents/guardians regarding programming. Youth Ministry must carefully screen volunteers who minister in the program. Activities need to be appropriately supervised and guidelines should be followed to insure a safe environment for youth. (See Safe Environment Policy Handbook)

This Department has been assigned the responsibility of providing policies and procedures to assist this leadership to create such places in our Diocese. The following policies and procedures are presented to help the Coordinator of Youth Ministry and others involved with ministry to youth.

Responsible Parties

The Coordinator of Youth Ministry (CYM) does not have to be paid to be the agent of the Parish. If the Parish has right of control over the Coordinator's work, the Coordinator is the agent of the Parish. Both the Parish and the Coordinator, as agent, may be held responsible for acts caused by the agent's negligence.

- All Coordinators of Youth Ministry are required to read the *Ethical and Personal Conduct Policies of the Diocese of Amarillo*. The CYM is responsible to see that all volunteers who work in Youth Ministry in the parish attend the Safe Environment Training.
- Adult chaperones/supervisors must be 21 years of age.

The Law of Negligence

A person is negligent and may be liable for his/her actions if:

- I. There was a duty.
- II. The duty was breached.
- III. There was injury or damaged.
- IV. The injury or damage was caused by the breach of that duty.

For example:

A young person has placed himself/herself in a risky situation while not being adequately supervised, and the young person is injured. There was a duty to supervise the young person; proper supervision was not provided; and the injury was due, at least in part, to lack of supervision.

Liability

- The Coordinator of Youth Ministry must have received signed **Parental/Guardian Consent, Liability Waiver and Medical Consent** forms for all youth that participate in events off of parish property. Additionally, medical information for all program catechists and youth registered in parish programs should be on file at the parish and updated at least annually.
- A **Parental/Guardian Consent, Liability Waiver** must be obtained for every young person under the age of 18 participating in youth events.
- Blanket liability forms should not be used
Note: A parish general form may be kept on file for weekly gatherings; however large events such as retreats, rallies, sports activities, etc. should have a liability form for each event.
- An adult waiver must be signed by each volunteer and adult chaperone for each event.
- A background check will be conducted for every youth-ministry employee or volunteer.

DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, continued

Diocesan Program Adult and Youth Volunteers, Parish Core Teams, and Catechists

must adhere to all policies and procedures set forth from the Diocese of Amarillo, Office of Youth Ministry.

Records of Attendance

- Accurate records of attendance must be kept if there is ever a question of the presence of a young person at a particular event.
Parents/Guardians may believe their children were at a particular event when, in truth, they were not.
Parishes should set up procedures to notify parents of youth non-attendance at an event for which the youth is registered or anticipated to attend.

Arrival and Dismissal

Coordinators of Youth Ministry are urged to remember that their responsibility to and for youth exists from the time of arrival until the time of departure from parish premises.

- Youth are never to be left unsupervised while attending any youth ministry function or activity, whether on the Parish premises or at another location.
- Two responsible adults must remain with the youth until all youth have left the function or Church premises, including parking areas.
- If it is necessary for a young person to leave a program early, written permission for the parent/guardian must be obtained. Written permission must also be obtained for the youth to leave the function with someone other than parent/guardian.
Once a youth has left an event, he/she should not be allowed to return to the event. (depending on the circumstances, i.e. excused for an emergency)

When Parents Are Late

- Never allow a youth to ride home with someone without parent/guardian written consent.

Parish Procedures of Implementing Policy

All attempts should be made to contact the parents or others by phone from the program site.

After a specified amount of time set by the parish, refer to the emergency contact on their consent form and contact that person.

These procedures should be communicated to all parents at the beginning of the year or at registration time for an activity or program.

Using Private Homes for Youth activities

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for young people to grow in their faith. While some parishes have Family Catechesis Programs where sessions are done in the home, it is highly encouraged that events involving youth be held on parish property or a facility conducive for the event (e.g., retreat center, KC Hall, etc.). Such events include meetings, prayer nights, lock-ins, retreats, choir rehearsals, socials, etc.

NOTE: If you use private homes for off-site activities, the homeowner should be aware of the increased liability risk they incur. They should check with the homeowner's insurance agent to see if they are protected for church group activities. Some policies cover such activities while others require an additional rider.

CYMs should make sure that if a private home is being used for a youth function, an invitation must be made to the entire group and parents are to be made aware of the location. It is the responsibility of the CYM to make sure that the activities and support materials, resources and discussion at a private home are age appropriate and are in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, continued

Water Safety

- Certified lifeguard(s) must be present when swimming at a pool, public or private, a lake, or the beach.
- Young people must use appropriate certified life preservers when using any kind of water craft and be instructed on the proper use of the craft before using it.
Each craft should have an adult on board.
Motorized craft must be driven by those age 21 and older, who have been properly instructed on the use of the craft.

Physically Challenging Activities

- Training for adult sponsors/volunteers for the particular activity that is planned should precede participation in the activity by any of the youth participants.

Some activities offer a high degree of physical challenge for the participants, for example, ropes courses, repelling, white-water rafting, skiing, etc. By the very fact that these activities are more challenging, they involve greater risk. For each such high-risk activity the following should be provided and appropriately used by all participants.

- Licensed, certified instructors who have a good safety record must be used to provide training to the youth and to participate throughout the activity as the leader of the activity.
- Proper safety and other equipment necessary or appropriate for the activity.
- A match between the difficulty of the activity and the skill of the participant. If there is a question about the match for a participant, that person should be asked not to participate.
- During physically challenging games
Avoid games that might result in head injuries or collisions with other persons or natural objects.
Avoid games that incite reckless or overaggressive behavior.
Avoid games that are hard to supervise. If you can't stop it quickly, you don't have enough control.
Don't make a reluctant participant play the game

The above information and policies are not offered to limit activities, but they are offered so that parishes and CYMs will take the necessary measures to keep possible injury at a minimum.

Fund-Raising

Each parish should have a fund-raising policy that discusses what type of fund-raising activities will be acceptable to the parish.

- Safe environment must be maintained for youth involved in any type of fund-raising activity.

NOTE: Coordinators should avoid fund-raising activities, which could degrade the integrity of the youth or place the youth in any possible danger. Such activities include:

Standing in or on street corners or intersections to solicit funds.

Going door to door without adequate adult supervision

Performing services or duties beyond their level of expertise/experience and without proper safety equipment, instructions, and supervision.

DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, continued

In Case of a Missing Person

- Never leave the other participants unsupervised to go and look for the missing person.

Procedures

- Determine by quick search if he/she is really missing.
- When reasonably sure he/she is missing, arrange to continue to search while the following steps are taken:
 - Notify the nearest appropriate authority (Police Department, Sheriff's Department, Park Ranger, etc)
 - Notify the Pastor of your Parish
 - The Coordinator of Youth Ministry or Pastor should contact the parents or if an adult is missing, the spouse or relative.
 - Be prepared to give as many of the following details as possible
 - Location and phone number
 - Name address and age of person and description
 - Occupation if an adult
 - Name of his/her parents or next of kin and telephone number
 - Background information of the event where the person was attending
 - Complete details on how this person disappeared (location and time last seen, activity that was going on at the time of the disappearance)
 - When the immediate emergency has passed, write a report with all the facts, as you know them.

Inclement Weather

- If outside at the onset of inclement weather, especially lightning, move all youth to an inside shelter and monitor the weather conditions.
- In the case of a tornado warning, move youth to an interior hallway, closet or bathroom away from windows and assume the "duck and tuck" position. If unable to leave because of the conditions, notify local authorities of your situation.
- Never leave anyone unattended.

Procedures

- Keep a phone line clear for the direct communication to Pastor, Diocese or incoming calls from parents
- Verify weather conditions
- Notify parents regarding dismissal or end of program
- Do not allow youth to leave without notification of parents
- Adults remain on duty until all youth have been picked up
- Secure property prior to departure.

Transportation

- Because you need to get your youth to the off-site youth ministry event or experience, transportation will always be an issue. **See Vehicles Safety Policy pages 31-34 for** forms ... form “A” is only for Diocesan employees and is not in the General Guidelines for Youth Ministry.
- Have the driving records been checked?
- Are all vehicles insured and if the vehicle is non-owned, does the driver have permission to utilize the vehicle?
- Are the proper numbers of students assigned to each individual vehicle, depending upon its capacity (number of seat belts)?
- Are all drivers advised to travel as a group or in pairs?

See unacceptable drivers: Vehicle Safety Policy pages 24-28

Camp facilities

When choosing a camp site for camping, retreat or some kind of outdoor adventure, it is a good practice to see the camp first hand. What shape is the camp in, how hospitable is the camp staff? How difficult will it be to get quick medical attention if necessary? Is the camp accredited and by whom? The most widely recognized accreditation is with the American Camping Association (ACA). This organization maintains a strict set of safety standards for staffing, buildings, programs, and services for all types of camps, religious and secular alike.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- In life-threatening situations, always contact 911, local EMS to provide ambulance service.
- Coordinators of Youth Ministry should make sure that they know where the nearest hospital or county hospital (for those with no medical insurance) is located both locally and when traveling off-site

Life-Threatening Emergency Procedures

911 should be called when the person

- Is or becomes unconscious
- Has trouble breathing
- Has chest pain or pressure
- Is bleeding severely
- Has pain or pressure in the abdomen that does not go away
- Is vomiting or passing blood
- Has seizures, a severe headache, or slurred speech
- Appears to have been poisoned
- Has injuries to the head, neck or back
- Has possible broken bones

Accidents

- If there is an accident, do not make any judgment regarding liability or negligence. If an accident prompts a police investigation, cooperate fully by stating what you witnessed, but do not offer opinions about any matter. Politely refer all additional questions to the Diocesan Attorney or Patsy graham, the Director of Administrative services. You should not make any statements or comments to the press or news media; refer them to the Pastor.

Procedures

If there is an accident on Diocesan Property the following procedures are designed to assist to gather accurate information.

- Assist them, and call for professional help if the injury warrants it.
- The comfort and protection of the injured person is of primary importance.
- Do not presuppose that the injury is minor enough not to warrant the completion of an Accident Report Form. (These should be available through your parish office). Even minor cuts and bruises can become a health concern.
- Begin to fill out the Accident Report Form. Remember to get names, addresses, and phone numbers of witnesses and any other parties involved. Be as accurate as possible in completing all information. Do not make any judgment regarding liability or negligence or commit to pay for medical treatment.
- Immediately (the beginning of the next work day) file an accident report with your Pastor or the appropriate parish administrator, and/or Diocesan Director of Administrative Services. If the matter concerns Safe Environment Policy contact the Diocesan Safe Environment Office.

MEDICAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, continued

First Aid

- Each parish Youth Ministry program must have a well-stocked and easily accessible first-aid kit.
- Medications may only be dispensed by CYM or authorized adult in accordance with the written instructions provided on the *Medical Consent* form by the parents/guardians.

NOTE: It is recommended that Youth Ministry team adults be trained in first aid and CPR. On out of town trips, or larger gatherings, it may be advisable to have licensed nurse or EMT on hand to help in a medical emergency for your group.

Illness and Injury Procedures

- Upon seeing the injured person, assess the situation for any additional possibility of injury to anyone else (including yourself). Make sure no one else will be injured. Would you be in danger if you tried to approach the victim to administer first aid? Don't put yourself in danger.
- Do not move the injured person unless he or she is in an immediate, life-threatening situation. Anytime an injured person is moved, there is risk of additional injury that might cause permanent damage or death. If you have to move the victim, do it as quickly as possible. Avoid twisting or bending the victim, who might have a neck or spinal injury.
- Call 911 or the local emergency number. If possible send another person to make the call.
- Contact parent/guardian
- If parent/guardian can not be found, contact emergency contact
- Take the *Medical Consent* form with you for any treatment.

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Physical Abuse & Neglect

- ***It's the Law:*** Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, or that a child has died of abuse or neglect **MUST** report his or her suspicions to the Texas Department of Human Service or local or state law enforcement agency.

Who Must Report: Any Person

Basis for Report: Having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect.

When to Report: IMMEDIATELY – A report must be made orally within 48 hours after there is cause to believe/suspect that the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

Penalty: Failure to report is a Class B misdemeanor. Knowingly or intentionally making a false report is a Class A misdemeanor.

Immunity: A person who, without malice, makes a report of suspected child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability.

Confidentiality: Reports of child abuse or neglect are confidential. Information in the reports, including the name of the person who makes the report, may be used only for purposes consistent with the investigation of abuse or neglect.

Allegations or Suspicions:

Look for any of the following signs of abuse:

Burns	Physical neglect
Beating	Medical neglect
Fracture	Lack of supervision

Procedures

- Obtain as much information as possible from the child or persons involved. Make sure you obtain as many FACTS as possible prior to making report.
- An oral report must be made immediately to the Child Protective Services, through its 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400) and obtain case number or contact local law enforcement with report of allegation.
- The entire incident should be reported to the pastor in order to inform him of this matter.
- The incident should be kept confidential.
- To report suspicious abuse within the church (clergy, employees, volunteers, etc.) call the victim assistance coordinator. Belinda Taylor at 806-372-7960

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PROCEDURES

Suicide

Warning Signs

- Expressing suicidal thoughts or a preoccupation with death
- Talking about dying or committing suicide in a joking or casual manner
- Expressing thoughts of dying or committing suicide through writing, drawing, or artwork
- Making preparations for dying
- Making out a will or beginning to give away prized possessions
- Personality changes
- Exhibiting abrupt mood swings and changes in behavior
- Expressing hostility, having outbursts of anger, or acting impulsively
- Becoming apathetic and uncaring
- Depression
- Feeling lonely, hopeless
- Changing eating and sleeping habits
- Beginning to use or increasing use of drugs or alcohol
- Losing interest or withdrawing from school activities, friends, and family
- Having made a previous suicide attempt

Allegations or Suspicions

- Make sure to obtain facts rather than hearsay
- Be aware. Learn warning signs
- Be direct

Procedures

- Speak to the individual of intentions or thoughts
- Document as much of the conversation as possible on an incident report
- Refer! Refer! Refer! Unless you are a professional Counselor do not take the situation in you own hands. Refer Parents/Guardians to a Counselor or Counseling Facility.
- Contact Parent & Guardians and meet with them in regard to the conversation unless it signals abuse in the home.
- Notify Pastor and give him a written report on the situation
- Follow up with Parents, and youth on process and additional assistance

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Drugs & Alcohol

- ❑ Youth and adults participating in youth events will not be permitted to consume alcoholic beverages during those events and programs.
- ❑ Use of illegal drugs is prohibited at any youth event. Prescription and nonprescription drugs can be used only as indicated for the individual. Authorization slips should identify such indications for prescribed drugs.
- ❑ Allegations of drug or alcohol possession or usage should be investigated to determine the accuracy of the allegation. Allegations or incidents should be reported immediately to the Coordinator of Youth Ministry (Diocesan Youth Director) and never handled by any one adult.
- ❑ If the allegations of possession or use of alcohol or drugs is presented, a party or parties should be approached by at least two adults to determine the accuracy of the allegation. If there is reasonable cause, the adults should request permission to search person's possessions. This should always occur in the presence of at least two adults. It should never be done alone. If the allegations prove false, the incident should be documented and given to the adult's supervisor. If allegations prove true, the parent(s) should be called and disciplinary action initiated. Such action may involve professional counseling or rehabilitation as well as some consequences for their ongoing active membership within ministry (i.e. Dismissal from event, suspension from trips or conferences for a semester, etc.).
- ❑ Local authorities may be notified in the case of illegal drugs.
- ❑ Do not take possession of the illegal drugs. Allow local authorities to do that.
- ❑ All youth found to have consumed alcohol or drugs in their possession must be dismissed from the youth event immediately.
- ❑ Parent/Guardian must be notified and, it is their responsibility to pick up their son/daughter.

Smoking

- ❑ Smoking will not be permitted at youth events. Adults, who smoke (not on parish property), must use a designated smoking area.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Weapons

- In the case of weapon possession, adults and youth should be told verbally and in writing that possession of any weapon is absolutely prohibited on the premises of any church event in the Diocese of Amarillo or while participating in any parish or Diocesan sponsored event.

- If a weapon is discovered, the local police should be called. It is imperative that the safety of all be safeguarded. At no time should the adult try talking the youth into surrendering the weapon. If there is an alleged weapon in the possession of someone attending an event, he or she should be approached in as discreet a manner as possible by two adults to determine if there is a weapon. At that point the police and parents should be notified of the incident. Any firearms, explosives, or knives with a blade over two (2) inches long are absolutely prohibited.

Procedures

- Verify Report and Accusation
- Notify Pastor and Staff
- Call Police/911 if necessary
- Initiate steps to reduce any risk
- Determine the location of the person with the weapon
- If possible take possession of the weapon from person or location
- Contact parents/guardians (if it is a youth)
- If injuries, assess situation
- Call for ambulance
- Accompany victim to hospital
- Make detailed report to the Pastor and any proper authorities

Internet/Media Policies and Procedures

Internet Networking Communities

We can not ignore the internet as a tool in communication in this day and age. However, it is imperative to adhere to specific guidelines when communicating to you via any form of media (ie: internet, AIM, texting, etc). This is not a tool to be used to befriend teens but to be used as a support in communicating effectively in the ministry.

MYSFACE, FACEBOOK, & others

All information displayed on the sites must reflect the Catholic faith and should not call any teaching of the church into question. This includes, and is not limited to, language, photos, songs, videos, bulletins, blogs, podcasts, and applications.

Youth Leaders must set up a separate site from their own (if a personal site is set up).

Absolutely no tagging pictures

AIM or any Instant Messaging Provider

Keep conversations brief, to the point and with volunteer Code of Conduct guidelines

Save copies of conversations

Transparency: in all cases, we must keep communications transparent. Parents must be fully aware of all mediums being used to keep in contact with their children for ministerial purposes.

Media Materials

- Review all media/video/DVD materials before using them publicly. R rated, Adult, or pornographic material is contrary to Christian principles and is prohibited. Adult/pornographic material should never be shown to youth or be in the possession of church employees or volunteers.

SAMPLE: PARISH CRISIS PLAN

PARISH CRISIS PLAN

Coordinate with Pastor, Parish Staff and School to develop a Crisis Plan for each individual parish. These are mere examples; however a more detailed parish plan may be necessary for all buildings, school and church. Make sure all staff and volunteers are aware of these procedures.

Emergency Numbers/Contact Persons

911

Fire _____

Police _____

Hospital _____

Ambulance _____

Child Protective Service _____

Emergency Codes

Assault _____ Bomb Threat _____

Chemical Hazard _____ Chemical (Interior) _____

Emergency Evacuation _____ Fire _____

Hurricane _____ Intruder _____

Tornado _____ Weapon on Campus _____

Basic Crisis Response Plan

- Assess situation at hand
- Call emergency assistance (911; Fire, Ambulance, Police) if necessary
- Activate appropriate Emergency Code to Staff, if necessary
- Pastor is notified and verifies the facts
- Contact parents of involved party, if appropriate
- Remain calm
- Ensure safety of all present
- Call On Site Team or additional staff if needed
- Initiate appropriate procedures
- Contact professional assistance (counselors, etc) if situation requires
- Assure all involved and parents of situation and state ONLY facts
- Follow up is key

Assault of Staff

- Notify Pastor or Parish Staff
- Call Police
- Remain calm; comfort and support the victim
- Provide medical attention if necessary
- Notify parents or designated family member

SAMPLE: PARISH CRISIS PLAN, continued

Assault of Youth

- Notify Pastor or Parish Staff
- Notify parents or designated family member
- Activate Emergency Code if necessary
- Remain calm; comfort and support the victim
- Provide minimal medical attention if needed
- Document bruises/injuries
- Ensure staff member remains with the victim until police arrive
- Accompany the victim and police/parents or family member to hospital if needed.

Fire

- **Notify Pastor and Staff**
- Notify Fire Department/911 if necessary
- Follow Parish Floor plan for evacuation
- Custodian or designated staff shuts down electrical and gas supply
- Activate Emergency Fire Code
- Proceed to designated safety area
- Leave meeting area with keys, purse, cell phone
- Close door and turn off lights
- Account for all present
- Verify safety of all present
- Wait for all clear signal to return to meeting room
- Listen for further instructions
- Be prepared to respond to parents calls

Bomb Threat/Person receiving the Call

- Remain calm; try to obtain the following:
- When is the bomb set to go off?
- What is the explosive?
- What does it look like?
- Where is the device located in the building?
- Why was it set?
- What will cause it to explode?
- Who are they trying to hurt?
- Are they aware of the danger harm they are causing innocent people?
- Try to identify characteristics of the caller
 - What does the voice sound like? (man, women, child)
 - Tone of voice (intoxicated, speech problem, accent)
 - Background noise
 - Time caller hung up
 - Remarks made by the caller
 - Inform Pastor and Parish Staff of situation and information obtained by the caller.

SAMPLE: PARISH CRISIS PLAN, continued

Bomb Threat/Bomb Found

- Notify Pastor
- Call Police/911 in life threatening
- Initiate appropriate Emergency Code
- **Do not** turn lights off/on
- **Do not** use any electronic device; pager, mobile phone, two-way radio, etc.
- **Do not** activate electronic equipment in the area
- **Do not** pick up any strange objects
- Keep all persons at least 300 feet away from the building where the bomb is located
- Verify that all personnel and youth are out of the building

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL EVENTS OUTSIDE OF DIOCESE

(Diocesan policy supercedes Regional or National Policies)

These policies also apply for those events outside the Diocese of Amarillo, which include World Youth Day, National Catholic Youth Conference, Region 10 Youth Conferences, Conferences outside Diocese, Work Camps, etc.

Administration

- ❑ Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be signed by parent/guardian of each participant under 18 years of age.
- ❑ Participants 18 years or older must sign their own Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form.
- ❑ An adult waiver must be completed for each CYM or adult chaperone.
- ❑ A COPY of the Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be submitted with registration.
- ❑ The ORIGINAL Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be kept by the CYM or Adult volunteer, and brought to the event with him/her.
- ❑ Code of Conduct must be signed for each participant of each event (Youth and Adult).
- ❑ Picture Identification must be available for each participant. (Identification would assist in prompt assistance with local authorities, in case of emergency).

Travel

- ❑ If trip is sponsored by the Office of Youth Ministry, transportation will be provided via bus or airline and all registered groups must travel with the department. For both Diocesan and parish trips, when using a bus with media systems for transportation, all media/video/DVD material must be reviewed by CYM before using them publicly. "R" rated and Adult rated material is contrary to Christian principles and is prohibited. Adult rated material should never be shown to youth or be in the possession of church employees or volunteer on parish property or on parish trips.
- ❑ ALL participants must use transportation provided by Diocese for Office of Youth Ministry sponsored trips and events. The Office of Youth Ministry will provide vehicle transportation for emergency use only.

NOTE: Check with the Diocesan Youth Office before scheduling a trip to a foreign country.

Event Registration

- ❑ All registrations must be received complete in the Office of Youth Ministry at the deadline designated for each event
A complete registration consists of the following:
 - Registration form for each participant
 - Consent, Liability Waiver and Medical Consent Form for each participant
 - Code of Conduct for each participant
 - Payment due upon registration, either deposit or registration amount

Refunds

- ❑ All Office of Youth Ministry sponsored event registration deposits are non-refundable. See specific program registration policy for details.

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, continued

CYM or Adult Chaperone/Volunteer

- ❑ Must be 21 years of age.
- ❑ Coordinators of Youth Ministry who attend events with youth are required to supervise the youth that attend with them at all times.
- ❑ Are expected to chaperone youth at all Diocesan sponsored events. Diocesan personnel and their representatives are responsible for facilitating the event, not for supervising youth.
- ❑ Must attend all scheduled meetings, gatherings and Diocesan prayer experience with Diocesan delegation at actual event.
- ❑ Alcohol or drug (see Drug and Alcohol Policies and Procedures).
- ❑ Gambling of any kind is not acceptable while chaperoning youth events.
- ❑ Failure to follow the policy will result in the dismissal of the event at the cost of the adult as requested by the Director of Youth Ministry.
- ❑ All persons (including minors) working with children or youth (including but not limited to chaperones, drivers, and short-term volunteers) must meet the requirements set forth by the Safe Environment Policy. See: Diocese of Amarillo Safe Environment Handbook

Supervision by Chaperone & Adult Volunteers

- ❑ A 1:7 adult/youth ratio is in effect for all high school youth events, and 1:7 adult/youth ratio for junior high/middle school events. Parish may opt to have smaller ratio.
- ❑ There must be at least one male and one female chaperone accompany each parish group if both gender youth attend events. It is the responsibility for the adult chaperones to go over the rules, expectations, etc., for the particular activity or event with the youth and to enforce them.

(Office of Youth Ministry will work with those parishes needing assistance in this area)

Housing

- ❑ Room accommodations for youth events are gender specific. Males are never allowed in female assigned rooms and females are never allowed in male assigned rooms without adult supervision.
- ❑ Parishes may adopt one of two rooming arrangements for a double-double room:
 1. One adult chaperone allowed with the following stipulations:
 - Adult chaperone may only share a bed with his/her own child, with no additional adults or youth sharing other bed(s)
 2. Youth only rooms without adults allowed with following stipulations:
 - Systematic, night-long check-ins by adult chaperones
 - Clear communication and understanding of parental liability for delinquent actions
- ❑ Adult must never be in a room alone with a youth.
- ❑ On any trips, Bags are subject search at the discretion of the youth minister and/or Diocesan Youth Director

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

See Drug and Alcohol Policies and Procedures.

Weapons Possession

See Weapons Policies and Procedures.

DIOCESAN EVENTS POLICES AND PROCEDURES

Administration

- ❑ Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be signed by parent/guardian of each participant under 18 years of age.
- ❑ Participants 18 years or older must sign their own Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form.
- ❑ An Adult Waiver must be completed for each CYM or adult chaperone.
- ❑ A COPY of the Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be submitted with registration.
- ❑ The ORIGINAL Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be kept by the CYM or Adult volunteer, and brought to the event with him/her.
- ❑ Code of Conduct must be signed for each participant of each event (Youth and Adult).

Travel

- ❑ No one under the age of 21 may drive other youth to or from a youth event, or during the event.
- ❑ CYM's and Adult Volunteers must provide transportation to and from the event.
Refer to transportation policy.
If using a bus with media systems for transportation, all media/video/DVD material must be reviewed by CYM before using them publicly. "R" rated and Adult rated material is contrary to Christian principles and is prohibited. Adult rated material should never be shown to youth or be in the possession of church employees or volunteer on parish property or on parish trips.
Office of Youth Ministry will provide vehicle transportation for emergency use only.

Event Registration

- ❑ All registrations must be completed when complete in the Office of Youth Ministry at the deadline designated for each event.
A complete registration consists of the following:
 - Registration form for each participant
 - Consents, Liability Waiver and Medical Consent Form for each participant
 - Code of Conduct for each participant
 - Payment due upon registrations received after the initial deadline.
- ❑ A late fee will be added for registrations received after the initial deadline.
- ❑ Published deadlines are absolute.
- ❑ Substitutions will be accepted until the final deadline.
- ❑ NO new registrations or substitutions will be accepted at the conference or rally on the day of the event unless other noted by the Diocesan Youth Director.
- ❑ Phone, registrations will not be accepted.
- ❑ Fee payment will not be accepted to hold places without complete registration forms unless approved by the Diocesan Youth Director.

Refunds

All Office of Youth Ministry event registration fees are non-refundable.
Partial refunds may be available if event is cancelled because of inclement weather.

DIOCESAN EVENTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, continued

CYM or Adult Chaperone/Volunteer

- ❑ Must be 21 years of age.
- ❑ Coordinators of Youth Ministry who attend events with youth are required to supervise the youth that attend with them at all times.
- ❑ Are exempted to chaperone youth at all Diocesan sponsored events. Diocesan personnel and their representatives are responsible for facilitating the event, not for supervising youth.
- ❑ Must attend all scheduled meetings, gatherings, diocesan prayer experience with diocesan delegation at actual event.
- ❑ Alcohol or drugs (see Drug and Alcohol Policies and Procedures).
- ❑ Gambling of any kind is not acceptable while chaperoning youth events.
- ❑ Failure to follow the previous policy will result in the dismissal of the event at the cost of the adult as requested by the Director of Youth Ministry.
- ❑ All persons (including minors) working with children or youth (including but not limited to chaperones, drivers, and short-term volunteers) must meet the requirements set forth by the Safe Environment Policy. See: Diocese of Amarillo Safe Environment Handbook

Supervision by Chaperone & Adult Volunteers

- ❑ A 7:1 youth/adult ratio is in effect for all high school youth events, and 7:1 youth/adult ratio for junior high/middle school events. Parish may opt to have a smaller ratio.
- ❑ There must be at least one male and one female chaperone accompany each parish group if both gender youth attend events. It is the responsibility for the adult chaperones to go over the rules, expectations, etc., for the particular activity or event with the youth and to enforce them.

(Office of Youth Ministry will work with those parishes needing assistance in this area)

Housing

- ❑ Room accommodations for youth events are gender specific. Males are never allowed in female assigned rooms and females are never allowed in male assigned rooms without adult supervision.
- ❑ Parishes may adopt one of the three rooming arrangements for a double-double room:
 1. One adult chaperone allowed with the following stipulations:
 - Adult chaperone may only share a bed with his/her own child, with no additional youth sharing other bed(s)
 2. Youth only rooms without adults allowed with the following stipulations:
 - Systematic, night-long check-ins by adult chaperones
 - Clear communication and understanding of parental liability for delinquent actions
- ❑ Adult must never be in a room alone with a youth.
- ❑ Bag searches must be conducted with parents present, before arrival at destination
- ❑ Additional bag searches may be conducted at destination as needed.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

See Drug and Alcohol Policies and Procedures

Weapons Possession

See Weapons Policies and Procedures

CODE OF ETHICS

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry has developed the following code of ethics for youth ministry leaders. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry recommends that youth ministry leaders adopt his code by signing, dating, and placing it in their personnel file. This code of ethics is intended for youth ministry leaders regardless of employment status within our church.

Professional and Ethical Obligations

1. Ministerial Role
 - a. Youth ministry leaders work collaboratively with the pastor (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
 - b. Youth ministry leaders faithfully represent the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action
 - c. Youth ministry leaders are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (231, *Code of Canon Law*).
 - d. Youth ministry leaders respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their personal form of spirituality normative.
2. Inclusion
 - a. Youth ministry leaders recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
 - b. Youth ministry leaders serve all people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
 - c. Youth ministry leaders ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities
3. Accountability
 - a. Youth ministry leaders are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the Archdiocesan bishop.
 - b. Youth ministry leaders are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministerial functions conscientiously, zealously, diligently (231, *Code of Canon Law*).
 - c. Youth ministry leaders exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.
4. Confidentiality
 - a. Youth ministry leaders respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
 - b. Youth ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or a third party.
 - c. Youth ministry leaders support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.
5. Conduct
 - a. Youth ministry leaders are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
 - b. Youth ministry leaders maintain appropriate professional boundaries (e.g. physical, sexual, relational, and emotional). Romantic, dating or sexual relationships between a youth ministry leader and an adolescent are inappropriate and unethical
 - c. Youth ministry leaders model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
 - d. Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with adolescents is inappropriate and unethical.

6. Referrals and Intervention
 - a. Youth ministry leaders are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
 - b. Youth ministry leaders are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
 - c. Youth ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.
7. Parish/Diocesan Policies
 - a. Youth ministry leaders are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or Diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DIOCESE OF AMARILLO

VEHICLES SAFETY POLICY

Revised 9-26-08

Adopted from the Diocesan Safety Policy (August 1997)

Safety in and around our church and school facilities is of utmost concern and the responsibility of every pastor, administrator, director, and employee. One of the most significant risks has to do with vehicular transportation. Whether transporting our children to school, to youth outings, or adult meetings, safety is important.

Proper risk management requires that there be reasonable precautions and actions to provide for the safety of people. As a member of the Catholic Umbrella Pool II liability insurance group with other dioceses, the Diocese of Amarillo is required to establish a vehicle safety policy.

There are three basic elements that are essential to an effective and successful vehicle safety program. The first deals with the selection and training of drivers who, through their employment, will be required to operate Diocesan vehicles on a full-time or occasional basis, or who through volunteerism, will be asked to operate a vehicle, either the Diocesan or their own, to transport people to a function. The second deals with proper maintenance and equipping of Diocesan vehicles. The last element has to do with accurate and detail record-keeping and reporting.

Each pastor, administrator, director, and employee should become familiar with this policy, especially those who drive vehicles or who are authorized to transport people. Inspection of the records will become a standard part of the insurance self-inspection report and review by the Catholic Mutual Risk Management.

Driver Selection and Training

Care should be exercised in selecting individuals who are required or asked to operate a vehicle on behalf of the Diocese. Accordingly, the following step should be followed and documented:

Volunteer Operators

1. A statement of driving history as shown on Attachment B must be obtained from all volunteers who are going to drive a Diocesan-owned, or their own vehicle to transport people to a Diocesan function on behalf of the Diocese.
2. If a volunteer is going to drive his own vehicle to transport people to Diocesan function, he must provide evidence to the Administrator of liability insurance with limits of not less than \$100,000.00/300,00.00. A copy of proper insurance should be attached to Transportation Attachment Form "C"
3. Current insurance laws and regulations state that the insurance for a vehicle, no matter its purpose, owner or driver, is the primary insurance carrier for any accident. There is an insurance policy for the Diocese that could offer additional liability coverage should a claim exceed the limits of the private policy.

4. All privately owned vehicles used on behalf of the Diocese must be insured according to Texas law. A private vehicle form, Attachment "C", must be obtained.

All Operators

1. All operators of vehicles on behalf of the Diocese must possess a current, valid driver's license for the type vehicle they will be operating and be at least 21 years of age (25 years of age if going out of state). *Note: Drivers need to be at least 25 years of age to rent a vehicle.* There shall be no physical disability noted on the license which would interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
2. No one will be allowed to drive on behalf of the diocese who has any of the following convictions in the past THREE years:
 - a. Operating a vehicle during a period of license suspension, revocation or forfeiture;
 - b. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
 - c. Hit and run accident;
 - d. Failure to report an accident;
 - e. Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle;
 - f. Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony;
 - g. Operating a motor vehicle without owner's authority;
 - h. Permitting an unlicensed person to drive;
 - i. Reckless driving;
 - j. Speed contest; OR
 - k. Any combination of accidents and/or moving violations which total three.
3. All operators and passengers must comply with the current Texas State safety belt laws regulations. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure this policy with all passengers.
4. All parents/guardians of youth being transported must fill out a waiver of all claims against the Diocese and parish for injury, accident, illness or death occurring during, or by reason of the event/travel. This form should include consent to participate, liability release and medical consent/information (see forms)
5. All drivers must complete the Volunteer Driver Information Sheet and the Safe Environment background check. These two forms along with a copy of insurance and a copy of a drivers license MUST be submitted to the youth ministry office two weeks prior to the transportation (see forms).
6. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age. (Request for specific exceptions may be submitted in writing to the Diocesan Youth Office at 1800 N. Spring St. Amarillo, Texas 79107).
7. One adult cannot be alone with a single youth in a vehicle. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.

Insurance on Diocesan Vehicles

1. All diocesan vehicles must have minimum liability insurance of \$100,000/300,000
2. 10-15 passenger vans are NOT allowed under any circumstance.

Vehicle Maintenance and Equipment

Preventive maintenance and inspection of vehicles is an important part of a vehicle safety program. Each vehicle must have the mandated state inspection each year.

1. At the time of the mandated State Inspection, each entity shall obtain a Vehicle Inspection Report, which is attached hereto as Attachment "D".
2. All multi-passenger, Diocesan-owned vehicles must be equipped with the first-aid kit.
3. Because of new U.S. Department of Transportation regulations, no Diocesan-owned multi-passenger vehicle is to be driven across Texas State lines without local institution approval.

Record Keeping and Accident Reporting

A very important element of a comprehensive vehicle safety program is complete reporting and maintenance of the various records obtained in the implementation of the program. All of the employee driver applications should be kept on file for a period of at least three years following termination of their driving privileges for the Diocese. Volunteer driver information forms should be kept for a period of three years. Safety inspection reports should be kept for a period of three years or until the vehicle is sold. Vehicle maintenance records and driver information records should be kept on file for a period of five years where an accident is involved. Any accident reports and injury reports should also be kept for a period of five years.

Accident Reporting

1. Obtain medical assistance at the scene as soon as possible, if needed.
2. Contact local police, sheriff or highway patrol authorities as required.
3. Driver should make no comment regarding the fault of either party.
4. Exchange driver, vehicle and insurance information.
5. Report the accident or moving violation to the Diocese upon return and complete a written accident and vehicle inspection form, if requested.
6. Report the accident to Catholic Mutual.
7. If the accident involved injuries to any person, report the accident to the Diocesan Finance Office.

Mechanical Problem

Upon return from any trip in which safety or mechanical problems are noted by the driver, the problem should be reported to the church, school, or diocesan administrator. Each entity shall be responsible for checking reported mechanical or safety problem before the vehicle is utilized again.

Diocesan Release Forms Overview

These forms were updated at the different times and will continue to be updated as needed. Please check on a yearly basis for updated forms. Do not change any of the wordings on these forms without checking with the Diocesan Youth Director. These forms are not optional, they are mandatory to be used as is (unless an exception is made because you request something special).

For Parish Events

Parish Youth Form A & Parish Adult Form B

1. These forms cover youth for regular parish activities in your home town area throughout the youth ministry year.
Examples: visiting nursing homes, faith formation gatherings, home parish retreats, bowling, movies, restaurant gatherings, etc.
2. These forms are NOT for Diocesan Sponsor activities or out of town activities sponsor by other parishes.

For Diocesan Events

All of these forms (Adult FORM C, youth FORM E, FORM F and if needed FORM I)

1. The original (preferably) or a copy needs to be send to the Diocesan Office.
2. A copy needs to be with you at the event in order to pull out in case of an emergency.
3. A copy should be kept back at the home parish.

For Regional, National and World Youth Events

Use all forms from Diocesan Events (Adult FORM C, youth FORM E, FORM F and if needed FORM I) plus any forms mandatory by the Regional, National and World Event Organizers.

1. The original (preferably) or a copy needs to be send to the Diocesan Office.
2. A copy needs to be with you at the event in order to pull out in case of an emergency.
3. A copy should be kept back at the home parish.

Other Conferences & Retreats

Example: Steubenville Conferences, T.E.C., Teen A.C.T.S., Diocesan Conference or Retreats outside the Diocese of Amarillo, etc.

Use all forms from Diocesan Events (Adult FORM C, youth FORM E, FORM F and if needed FORM I) plus any forms mandatory by the organizers of that event/activity.

1. The original (preferably) or a copy needs to be send to the Diocesan Office (ONLY if organized by the Diocesan Youth Office.) If not, send to the organizers of that specific event/activity if so required.
2. A copy needs to be with you at the event in order to pull out in case of an emergency.
3. A copy should be kept back at the home parish.

Transportation Forms

Form B, Form C and Form D

1. The Original needs to be filed in your parish at all times
2. A copy may must be with you when traveling
3. A copy of the Incident Report Forms must always be with you when traveling

FOR INTERNET USERS

All Diocesan forms may be downloaded separately at the following addresses:

www.amarillodiocese.org

www.covenantteen.com

REFERRAL SERVICES

Catholic Charities - Catholic Family Service, Inc. www.catholicfamilyserve.org	806-376-4571
Deaf Ministry - Sylvia Bartels	806-383-2243
Respect L:ife Ministry – Stephanie Frausto	806-655-2646
Children’s Protective Services	800-252-5400
Amarillo Police Department Local Police Department	806-378-3038
Runaway Switchboard	888-580-4357
Suicide and Crisis Center	800-692-4039
Amarillo Diocese Victim Assistance	806-372-7960

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Guideline for Youth Ministry is designed to assist the youth ministry leaders in the Diocese of Amarillo. Information has been gathered in response to requests by youth ministers for basic information and policies and procedures approved by the Diocese to be adapted for use in their parish programs.

Our hope is that this guideline will assist and encourage youth ministry leaders in the Church's mission. There are many who assisted in the development of these guidelines.

We wish to acknowledge the following:

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry for its documents: *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*; *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith*, *The Challenge for Catholic Youth Evangelization: Called to be Witnesses and Storytellers*; the *Competency Based Standards for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry*.

Diocese of Corpus Christi
Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston
Diocese of Forth Worth
Diocese of Tulsa
Diocesan Directors of Catholic Youth Ministry in Region 10

Most Revered Patrick James Zurek, Bishop of the Diocese of Amarillo
Fr. Hector Madrigal – Central Deanery Dean
Fr. Francisco Perez – East Deanery Dean
Fr. John Valdez – South Deanery Dean
Fr. Scott Raef – North Deanery Dean
Mr. Fred Griffin Attorney, General Counsel for the Diocese of Amarillo
Dcn. Blaine Westlake, Deaconate office & Safe Environment
Dcn. Floyd Ashley, Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Bernice Noggler, Superintendent of Catholic Education
Sr. Janet Abbacchi, Christian Formation

Mr. Johnathan Sumpter – St. Thomas the Apostle Church Youth Minister
Mrs. Sheri Friemel – St. Mary's Church Youth Minister

Oscar Guzman Diocesan Youth Director
Leticia Quintero – youth office temp secretary

Diocese of Amarillo
Attn: Office of Youth Ministry
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www.amarillodiocese.org

www.covenantteen.com

Youth office: 806-383-2243 ext. 118
Toll Free: 800-658-6643 ext. 118
Fax: 806-383-8452