

FAQs for Youth Ministry Field Trips Catholic Diocese of Richmond

What does the adult to youth ratio need to be for high school youth events?

We recommend that you have 1 adult for every 8-10 high school youth. If you are attending a specific sponsored event or program, you should check to see if they have a different required ratio that might require more adults to the number of teens.

What does the adult to youth ratio need to be for middle school youth events?

We recommend that you have 1 adult for every 6-8 middle school youth. If you are attending a specific sponsored event or program, you should check to see if they have a different required ratio that might require more adults to the number of youth.

Beyond the adult to youth ratio, is there a minimum number of adults that I need for an event?

Any off-site event must be chaperoned by at least two unrelated adults.

How many adults need to be present at a worksite?

Two adults need to be present. Any off-site event must be chaperoned by at least two unrelated adults.

What if I just have a couple of youth attending an event?

Any off-site event must be chaperoned by at least two unrelated adults. With small groups of youth or when you have a tough time finding another chaperone, think about pairing up with another parish to share chaperoning responsibilities.

How old does an adult need to be to be considered an “adult chaperone?”

Legally, someone who is 18 is considered to be an adult. Students in high school, regardless of age, may never be an adult chaperone. Use your judgment on the age and maturity of younger adults to determine if they can serve as an adult chaperone. Note that some events or roles require that adult chaperones be at least a certain age. Be sure to follow that specific event’s policy.

What background checks do adult volunteers who work with minors need to do?

Volunteer Background Screening & Safe Environment Training Requirements for volunteers in the diocese can be found at <https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/> Volunteers (age 18 and older) are required to complete Screening One Volunteer. Students in high school, regardless of age, may never be an adult chaperone. Paid employees of the diocese have additional screening. Re-screening is completed every 5 years.

An additional requirement for all employees and volunteers working with minors is a one-time attendance, at a VIRTUS *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* session with monthly online bulletin follow-up. To register for VIRTUS, go to <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/registering-for-an-upcoming-virtus-training-program/>.

How old does a driver need to be to transport youth?

Drivers should be at least 21 years old to transport youth. It is recommended that you check on their driving records from DMV to make sure they have no major violations within the last three years. Drivers need to be in compliance with the Safe Environment policies of adults who work with minors.

How old does a driver need to be to drive a rented vehicle?

Drivers should be at least 21 years old to transport youth. It is recommended that you check on their driving records from DMV to make sure they have no major violations within the last three years. Drivers need to be in compliance with the Safe Environment policies of adults who work with minors.

How many adults should be involved with transporting youth to an event?

Transportation provided while on parish-, school-, or diocesan-sponsored events, require the presence of two adults, unrelated, in the vehicle while children or youth are being transported. When it is not possible to provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult with two or more youth members, never one adult to one child.

What if a youth needs a ride home from an event?

You can never have a 1 to 1 ratio of an adult to youth in a vehicle. The minimum required is one adult with two or more youth members, never one adult to one child.

What sort of driver's insurance does an adult volunteer driver need to have to drive their personal vehicle?

Drivers should have their vehicle insured and their liability limits should be at \$100,000/\$300,000 and at least \$50,000 for personal property damage.

How do we check on insurance?

Drivers should fill out the form found on the website and submit it to the youth minister or parish coordinator of the particular event. You can find the form here:

<https://evangelizerichmond.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/VolunteerDriverForm2011.pdf>

What sort of insurance should we have if we rent a vehicle?

Parishes should take out full coverage from rental companies. Should anything happen, this insurance is primary; the insurance of the diocese is secondary.

If we charter a bus, does the company bus driver need to be background checked like all the other adults?

No.

Can we drive vans that seat 11 to 15 passengers?

No, these vans cannot be used in any capacity. Thus, they cannot be used even if seats are taken out to create a vehicle with less seats. Although some people own these vans and are willing to offer them for parish/diocesan use, they cannot be used. Although some companies rent these vans, they cannot be used.

Minivans and 14 passenger activity buses are okay, though.

If we take youth off site for an event, what sort of permission slip and medical release should we have?

You should have a release form on file for all minors you take on a field trip. Consider including a media release as well. You can find a template on the website here:

<http://www.richmonddiocese.org/evangelization/forms.htm>

What are the policies for overnight accommodations?

Overnight retreats/events require the presence of two unrelated adults. Staff and volunteers should not provide shared, private, overnight accommodations for individual young people in any Church-owned facility, private residence or hotel room where there is no other adult supervision present. Adults should have separate sleeping quarters from youth. Within sleeping areas, bathrooms and showers should be designated separately for adults or youth. If you are unable to have separate facilities, there should be designated times of use for youth and adults.

Can parents share accommodations with their own children?

Yes. Keep in mind that with other unrelated minors the above stated policy must be in place, though.

For More Information

Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond
<http://www.richmonddiocese.org/safe-environment>