

Risk Awareness Agreements and Permission Slips

Whether the participants in any event at parish or school facilities are volunteers, members of parish/school sponsored groups, or non-parish guests, they are faced with certain risks that are attached to their participation in these activities. Regardless of the activity or group, it is in the best interest of the parish to advise these groups of the relationship between their organization and the parish and what liabilities the parish and diocese are capable of assuming and which liabilities they are not capable of assuming.

Chaperones and Adult Volunteers

- a) Age Requirement. Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. See Code of Conduct “Definitions” Section A.
- b) Emergency Procedures. An emergency plan should be discussed between staff, chaperones, and volunteers BEFORE the planned activities takes place. An emergency call list should be verified prior to leaving and at least two people must carry the list during the trip. Common scenarios, such as adverse weather, missing child, possible injury, vehicle accident, and unplanned itinerary changes should be discussed in advance.
- c) Permission Slips and Forms. All activities held away from the parish/school property and all overnight activities require permission slips signed by a parent or guardian (*Form B*). This form contains the medical release and emergency contact information. For all off-site events, a copy of this form for each young person is to be “in hand” by the Chaperone/Supervisor that have been assigned to monitor them, including while traveling. An additional copy is to remain at the parish along with a list of all participants at the event.
- d) Responsibilities. Chaperones will abide by the same rules and requirements given to minors (i.e., follow driving laws and no alcohol at any time during the trip or event). Chaperones are asked to be reasonably available and visible at all times; take part in enforcing the rules; and take control of any situation that could harm a participant and/or jeopardize the continuation of the current event or future activities. Adult volunteers for youth events are mandatory reporters and should report any abuse concerns to the DYM and CPS.
- e) Safety Regulations. All chaperones must follow all procedures and safety precautions set forth by the Diocese and the parishes/schools and must be in compliance with the requirements adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and or Child Abuse.
- f) Supervision Ratio. The parish/school is responsible for supervision if it is known that unsupervised participants may be present. Supervision is more than physical presence; it should involve direct interaction with the young people in attendance. See Code of Conduct “Specific Guidelines” Section H.
- g) Confidentiality. All medical and personally identifiable information about another person should remain confidential and not shared with others except in the case of a medical emergency. At the end of the event, all forms, including copies should be returned to the DYM or parish.
- h) Retention and Scanning of Permission Slips. You are required to keep all permission forms, including release forms for adults for 21 years after the event. Most parishes keep the hard copies. It would be permissible to electronically scan the permission slips to retain digital copies and discard the hard copies. This should only be done if the scanning is good quality, there is an efficient and orderly manner of storing the forms electronically, all the forms are complete in their entirety, and you have a backup version should your computer fail.

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Volunteer Risk Awareness Agreement Form (Form A)

You should have volunteers in parish sponsored youth programs (whether adults or minors) complete this form. It is kept on file at the parish.

Permission Slip (Form B)

We recommend that you use this as a registration form at the beginning of the program year to cover all onsite activities. This template can also be used to as a permission slip for individual offsite trips. Offsite trips must be specified on a permission slip by name, date(s), and times. In other words, you may NOT use this form to obtain permission for every youth ministry event for a year. This form covers liability release, medical release, and photography release. This form is required regardless of the mode of transportation employed for offsite trips (e.g., bus rented by the sponsoring location or participants driven in private vehicles).

Foreign Travel Release Form (Form C)

Use this form for trips involving foreign travel.

Adult Participant Release Form (Form D)

This template is for any event where an adult is a participant (not a volunteer), which is mainly applicable to Young Adult and Campus Ministry events. It is not required but is tool to use if you wish to have adult participant information on file.

Please direct Risk Management questions to:

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Or visit the Diocesan Risk Management Website at:

<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/offices-and-directory/office-of-risk-management/>