

Capuchin Franciscan Youth and Family Ministries

Policies and Procedures for Creating a Safe Environment for Young People

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SECTION 1

Mission Statement and Preamble

I. Mission Statement

In the spirit and tradition of St. Francis of Assisi, Capuchin Youth & Family Ministries (CYFM) is rebuilding today's Catholic Church by reaching out to young people and their families through retreats, parish ministry, and service to the poor. Lives are changed. The CYFM community nurtures faith, takes action through service to those in need, and magnifies God's love in the world

II. Preamble

1. With regard to our mission and all matters concerning this document, **The Policies and Procedures for Creating a Safe Environment for Young People ("Safe Environment Policies")**, we hold ourselves to the highest standards. We endorse and adhere to the principles found in the Bishop's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in all our programs. These broad principles are the foundation upon which we have built our Safe Environment Policies and procedures that address the specific program elements of our activities and the uniqueness of our physical plant.
2. For the purposes of this policy, Capuchin Youth and Family Ministries (CYFM) considers an adult to be any staff member, any person involved in our programs 21 years old or older, or any person 18 - 21 years old who is not in high school and who serves in a leadership capacity in our program. Such people will hereafter be referred to as "adults" or "adult". CYFM holds all adults involved in our program accountable for understanding the Safe Environment Policies and implementing them. "Program leader" refers to the adult assigned by the Executive Director to run a particular program.
3. For the purpose of this policy we will refer to those whom we serve not described as adults above as either "youth", "young people" or "young person".
- 4) Special care will also be taken to insure that all adults and volunteers will be trained in the execution of the Safe Environment Policies and that they will abide by the continuing education and re-certification procedures contained in the Safe Environment Policies.

SECTION 2

CYFM GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES

I. Rationale

We believe in a God who is Trinity. God has revealed himself as a community of persons whose essential nature is relationship. We have been created in the image of that God (Genesis 1:27) and therefore relationship is at the heart of what it means to be human. It is not surprising then, that our Bishops wrote in their 1997 Pastoral Letter on Ministry with Adolescents, *Renewing the Vision*, “Effective Ministry with Adolescents is built on relationships.” (p. 3) In another place, the Bishops speak of “youth-friendly” communities that provide “young people with opportunities for intergenerational relationships—developing relationships with adults who serve as role models and mentors...” and “communities [that] make a commitment to young people and their growth.” (pp. 13 – 14) CYFM is committed to such life giving relationships between youth and adults. We value friendships and relationships between youth and adults for the important role they play in positive human development as well as in faith development.

We establish these Safe Environment Policies knowing that our relationships with young people are perhaps our most effective means of evangelization. We seek to create an atmosphere in which healthy relationships are encouraged and nurtured, while creating an environment in which every young person is safe from emotional, physical, and spiritual harm.

II. Requirements For Adults

1. CYFM requires that all adults, with the exception of kitchen volunteers (See Section 3, II):
 - a) Be registered members of their home parish for at least six months prior to volunteering.
 - b) Sign a release authorizing the Archdiocese through his/her parish, or authorizing CYFM to complete a background check verifying his/her social security number and a check of national and state criminal and sex offender registries;
 - c) Participate in the Virtus *Protecting God’s Children* training session or his/her diocesan equivalent;
 - d) Participate in CYFM’s Safe Environment Policies implementation program;
 - e) Read, sign, and commit to adhering to CYFM’s Safe Environment Policies.

III. Guidelines For Conduct

1. The conduct of those working or volunteering with CYFM must reflect the mission of the Church and of CYFM. Because of their presence as a representative of CYFM and their relationships with the young people with and to whom they minister, they have great influence. They are therefore called to engage in positive behavior and to set and to maintain appropriate boundaries in their relationships with young people.
2. Abuse and/or neglect of minors are contrary to the teachings of the Church and are prohibited. Adults have a responsibility to protect youth from all forms of abuse and/or neglect. Adults are prohibited from:
 - a) Engaging in any covert or overt sexual behaviors with any young person.
 - b) Speaking to minors in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating.
 - c) Sexual or inappropriate touching.
 - d) Communication which includes sexual innuendo, sexual comments or jokes; discussion of their own sexual activities; and inappropriate conversation, including the use of vulgar language or cursing.
 - e) Playing any music, movie or television program of a vulgar or sexual nature; or the display of any pornographic or sexually explicit material.
 - f) Being nude in the presence of minors.
 - g) Giving gifts to young people without prior approval from the parent or guardian of the youth, or the director or assistant director.
 - h) Giving gifts containing sexual material or age inappropriate content.

IV. Transportation

1. Unless specifically noted to the contrary, CYFM does not provide transportation to or from any activity. Transportation to and from activities is the sole responsibility of the parent.
2. When a CYFM activity includes transportation, all drivers will adhere to all aspects of the Safe Environment Policies.
3. A permission form will be provided outlining the time and place of the activity and type of transportation to be provided and this form must be signed by a parent or guardian.
4. An adult may never be alone with a young person in a vehicle, except in emergencies or when there is no other practical alternative.
5. When an adult must transport a young person alone, this must be cleared with the Executive Director or the Program Director prior to the trip. In cases where this is not practical, the driver must promptly report the occurrence of such situation to the program director. In cases where the Program Director must drive a young person alone, he/she must notify the Assistant Director in accordance with the dictates of this paragraph.

V. CYFM Facilities

1. All doors with outside access will be locked during the evening and early morning hours
2. All storage areas including the DDA closet must be locked during the program.
3. The Program Director will be responsible for controlling access to all secluded areas in the building and keeping empty rooms locked.

VI. Supervision

1. Determining the number of adults needed for supervision of adolescents depends on a number of factors: the nature of the activity, the age of the adolescents and the location of the activity. All activities require a minimum of two adults, acting in a supervisory capacity, with the exception of transportation during CYFM outreach programs. (See Section 4, II below)
2. Adults must be present on site early enough to greet all youth as they arrive. Adults must remain on site in their supervisory capacity until the last young person has left.
3. In the event of an overnight activity, unless the group being supervised is either all boys or all girls, there must be a supervisor of each gender.
4. All participants must be oriented to all safety rules and regulations at the start of the weekend.
5. Adults must be aware of romantic relationships that can develop among young people, particularly on programs extending over several days, and must monitor the situations and intervene appropriately.
6. Adults are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management.

VII. Overnight Accommodations

1. On retreats, Capuchin Outreach Program (COP), College COP, Capuchin Appalachian Mission (CAM), and overnight trips, adults will make clear to all participants the restrictions concerning sleeping areas. There should never be males and females sleeping in the same room, nor present in one another's sleeping areas at any time of the day.
2. While adults have supervision responsibilities, they should also observe restrictions about being in the sleeping areas of the opposite gender. Emergency or exceptional circumstances, (e.g. certain situations requiring discipline, or accident, or illness) may require the presence of an adult of the opposite gender in such an area. Likewise, the performance of routine maintenance or cleaning is an appropriate exception.

3. Youth will be supervised in dormitories during sleep time by at least two adults who will be accessible to them. Young people will be instructed how to access them.
4. All adults should sleep in a place where other adults are around, not necessarily the same room, but in the same area. No adult shall be in the position that he/she is sleeping in a location that is removed from other adults that would lend itself to be considered a secluded area. Examples of these situations are: sleeping alone in a church, or in a van on a mission trip etc.

VIII. Meeting With Young Persons

1. An adult may never be alone with a young person in an isolated place.
2. Our ministry at times calls for meetings between an adult and an individual young person. Such meetings should be held in appropriate settings at appropriate times and should not be held at places or times that would cause the young person involved confusion about the nature of the relationship. Adults must never conduct such meetings in private living quarters.

IX. Physical Contact

1. Appropriate affection between adults and young persons constitutes a positive part of Church life and ministry. The following forms of affection are generally regarded as appropriate between adults and minors: Hugs; holding hands during prayer; pats on the shoulder or upper back; arms around shoulders; touching hands, shoulders and arms of youth; and verbal praise. Such physical expressions of appropriate affection must be in public.
2. If a young person is uncomfortable with a hug or another listed expression of affection, then adults must refrain from such expression and not ridicule that young person because of his or her discomfort.
3. Adults must never satisfy their needs for affection, intimacy, attraction, and affirmation with minors. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for young people, adults must not engage in the following: inappropriate or lengthy embraces; kissing on the mouth; wrestling with young people; tickling young people; piggy back rides; massages; any form of unwanted affection; any touch or communication with which a young person is uncomfortable; and compliments that relate to physique or body development.

X. Alcohol and Illegal Substance Policy

1. Possession of or consumption of alcohol or illegal substances by youth and adults will not be tolerated on CYFM premises or at CYFM youth events. Similarly, no youth or adult may be under the influence of alcohol or an illegal substance while on CYFM premises or at CYFM youth events.

XI. Guidelines for Disclosure

1. When a volunteer adult holds a professional certification (Doctor, Nurse, Social Worker etc.) he/she should respond to referral and disclosure situations in a manner appropriate to his/her qualification, unless the CYFM policy is more restrictive. (For example # 3 below)
2. A crisis (situation where a young person could potentially cause serious foreseeable and imminent harm to themselves or others, for example a young person makes a suicidal threat) can occur at any time. In the event of such a crisis, adults will attempt to contact a parent/ legal guardian/ emergency contact, communicate their level of concern, suggest the need for a professional assessment and ask about initiating the process. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, refuses to come and get the individual, or appears to be unconcerned and is not going to act, adults will contact the individual's pastor or youth minister to solicit additional assistance. If a parent still does not respond, adults will call the police, for their assistance in contacting emergency personnel appropriate to the situation.
3. Adults recognize a young person's expectation of privacy and try to honor that in a professional way. This does not include information regarding the threat of serious foreseeable and imminent harm to themselves or others.
4. By law, conversations between youth ministers and young people are not "privileged communications". This means that if information about what a young person says to an adult is requested by a parent, a court of law, or other individual who has a need to know, the adult must share the information.

XII. Guidelines for Reporting

1. All adults are required to promptly report violations or omissions of the Safe Procedure Policies for review and appropriate action to one of the following:
 - a. The Program Director (who will report it immediately to b or c).
 - b. One of the full time professional staff (who will address the situation immediately and report it promptly to the Executive Director.)

- c. The Executive Director
- 2. If there is an indication of illegal actions by adults or staff, adults shall notify the police or other civil authorities immediately.

XII. Discipline Procedures

1. When adult conduct is in violation of the Safe Environment Policies, it is the responsibility of the executive director or the associate director to address the problem(s) in a timely and equitable manner. The procedure may include four steps: a) Counseling, b) Formal Warning, c) Probation, and d) Termination.
 - a. Many conduct deficiencies are identifiable and can be addressed and resolved through informal counseling which may include:
 - i. Clear identification of the problem with specific examples;
 - ii. A mutually agreed upon action plan to resolve the problem.
 - b. Formal Warnings should be initiated when 1) counseling fails to resolve the problem, or 2) the problem is of such a serious nature that immediate and formal resolution is required. Formal warnings shall include a written statement that:
 - i. Is signed by the adult to whom it is directed
 - ii. Kept on file.
 - c. Probation should be initiated when a warning process has not succeeded or when the misconduct is such that a second infraction would clearly warrant termination. Probation will include:
 - i. The same elements as the formal warning plus an emphasis that failure to meet the conditions of the probation will result in termination if significant improvement is not demonstrated consistently in the probation period.
 - ii. With the successful conclusion of the probation period the adult on probation will be notified in writing that he or she is no longer on probation.
 - iii. All relevant documents will be kept on file.
 - d. Termination should be administered under one of two conditions: failure to improve conduct previously addressed through counseling, formal warning, or probation; or serious and or major offenses, to be determined at the discretion of the executive director. All documents pertaining to termination shall be kept on file.

SECTION 3

CYFM Community Program Guidelines

I. Team Formation

1. All team formation meetings will be held at CYFM. When the overnight team meeting cannot be held at CYFM due to scheduling, the overnight can be held at the home of one of the adult team members under the following conditions.
 - a) All adults present in the home during this overnight meeting must be up to date with the CYFM Safe Environment Policies. No person who is not a CYFM employee or volunteer or a team member shall be permitted in the home during the overnight meeting. This restriction shall not apply to children less than 18 years of age who live in the home. It also does not apply to a spouse who is background checked and Virtus trained.
 - b) The program director and assistant will make a facility check and assure that all sleeping arrangements are carefully made to conform with CYFM policies in Section 2, V.
 - c) Any deviation from this procedure should be reported promptly to the CYFM Director for review, investigation, and appropriate action.
2. During Team Formation that takes place at CYFM, all team members will practice fire drills and familiarize themselves with CYFM emergency protocols.

II. Kitchen and Palanca

1. The Kitchen Supervisor will always be an adult who is in compliance with our Safe Environment Policies and will be responsible for all Kitchen Volunteers.
2. Kitchen Volunteers must:
 - a. Read the "Role of a Kitchen Volunteer", this is posted in the kitchen and on the sign-in table.
 - b. sign in on arrival, (this acknowledges that they have read and understand the "Role and responsibilities of a Kitchen Volunteer") and sign out when leaving
 - c. Wear a name tag throughout their stay.
3. Kitchen volunteers have access only to the Kitchen level of the building, and should enter and exit from the kitchen ramp door
4. The supper Kitchen Supervisor will collect the sign-in sheet at the end of the evening meal and file it with the weekend records.
5. At no time should an adult kitchen volunteer be alone with a young person in an isolated place. (The obvious exception is a parent with his/her own child)

SECTION 4

CYFM Outreach Programs

Capuchin Outreach Program (COP)
Capuchin Appalachia Mission (CAM)
College COP

I. The Challenge of Outreach Programs

Outreach programs provide a special challenge in adhering to our Safe Environment Policy. These challenges are due to many activities taking place at locations far from the retreat center in Garrison. In these situations it is the responsibility of the adults to assure as safe an environment as is reasonable and to adhere to CYFM's Safe Environment Policies.

II. Supervision

1. For all CAM worksites the two adults policy will be in effect.
2. For COP and College COP, one adult may drive two or more youth to a worksite and supervise there provided other adults from the worksite program are accessible in the area where the activities take place.
3. The adults from CYFM, upon arrival at a worksite, will survey the physical surroundings for challenges or issues with regard to providing a safe environment and devise a plan for providing for the safety of all involved.

SECTION 5

Volunteer Acknowledgement

I, _____, a volunteer of Capuchin Youth and Family Ministries, or an adult in charge of a group utilizing CYFM's facilities, acknowledge receipt of CYFM's Policies and Procedures for the Safe Environment for Young People. By signing below, I affirm that I understand the policies and agree to their implementation. I believe that our mission is best served by providing a safe place for young people to learn about their faith, to form and experience Christian community, and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I understand that my failure to adhere to the policies set forth in this manual could result in my being excluded from volunteering to serve CYFM in any capacity.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Received by CYFM on _____, by _____
(Date) (Staff Member)

Employee Acknowledgement

I, _____, an employee of Capuchin Youth and Family Ministries, acknowledge receipt of CYFM's Policies and Procedures for the Safe Environment for Young People. By signing below, I affirm that I understand the policies and agree to their implementation. I believe that our mission is best served by providing a safe place for young people to learn about their faith, to form and experience Christian community, and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I understand that my failure to adhere to the policies set forth in this manual could result in my being dismissed from employment by CYFM.

Signature of Employee

Date

Received by CYFM on _____, by _____
(Date) (Staff Member)

SECTION 6

Additional Resources

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People Revised Edition found at:
<http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>

Safeguarding God's Children: NFCYM Policies for Protecting Young People
Developed by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry In
Consultation with the USCCB Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection
and the Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth
<http://www.nfcym.org/youthprotection/>