



The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

Standards For Youth & Children's Ministries

On The Diocesan Level

The Diocese of East Carolina constantly strives to welcome and protect the wellbeing of all children and youth who participate in activities in our congregations and in the Diocese. As a result of this commitment the Bishop and the Department of Youth Ministries have established the following Standards for Youth and Children's Ministries. Each of these standards is rooted in our Baptismal Covenant (BCP pgs. 305-306) and seeks to exemplify our strong commitment to safeguard the children and youth entrusted to our care.

Information and Policies

The following statements are designed to assist you as you prepare to attend any diocesan-level youth event. These policies are in compliance with standards and guidelines from The Episcopal Church. Some are responses to common inquiries from youth leaders and parents. In some cases there could be changes in this information due to the particulars of an individual event. If there are any changes they will be issued by the Program Officer in pre-event information and publicity.

Adult Sponsors: Beginning with youth events scheduled after September 1, 2011 ALL parishes will be required to send at least one adult sponsor for up to every 6 youth registered to attend the event (ex. 2 youth:1 adult, 8 youth:2 adults, 15 youth:3 adults, etc.). Adults are expected to be full participants in the event. Adults must be at least 18-years old for Middle School events and at least 21-years old for High School events. Parishes should send both male and female sponsors for co-educational groups; for same gender events, sponsors should be the same gender as the attendees. All of these adults must have completed the Diocese of East Carolina's Sexual Ethics training as it pertains to working with children and youth.

Adult Sponsor Concerns: Youth who are unable to obtain a sponsor should contact the Program Officer to make alternative arrangements.

Presence: All participants, youth and adult, are expected to be present from the time the program begins until it ends.

Parish Registrations: Individual registration forms will not be accepted for Diocesan Youth Events (Youth Conferences, New Beginnings, Happening, and other designated events) scheduled for September 1, 2011 or after. All young people must submit their individual registration forms to the Youth Ministry Leader in their parish. Youth Ministry Leaders will subsequently complete a Parish Registration Form for each event and submit a Parish Registration Packet for each event. The Parish Registration Packet must be received by the registration deadline and include a completed Parish Registration Form, all indicated information/forms for all participants, youth and adult, and the signature of the Rector or Sr. Warden. Individual participants can pay their event registration fees or a parish may submit one check for all of the participant's event registration fees. All checks must be made payable to the Diocese of East Carolina.

Parish Registrations Packets CANNOT be accepted and spaces WILL NOT be held without payment for every participant. (Please see the Scholarship Section for more information about financial assistance.

Individual Registrations: Each participant, youth or adult, must submit an Individual Registration form. This form must be signed and completed by the participant, and if under 18 or still attending High School, the form must also be signed by a parent or legal guardian. This form must accompany the Parish Registration Form and come directly from the Parish Youth Ministry Leader.

Staff and Team Applications for Youth Events: Applications (youth or adult) to serve on a staff or team for a Youth Event are separate from Parish Registrations. Each youth event will have its own staff or team application deadline, pre-event planning meeting and fee specific to that event. Applications and Event Fees are mailed directly to the Program Officer or a person designated by the Program Officer.

Registration Concerns: If an individual participant is the only young person attending a youth event from their parish, please contact the Program Officer before submitting any forms for an event.

Event Fees: Fees for events are based on the anticipated number of participants and the estimated cost of the event including, but not limited to: housing, meals, and supplies. At this time refunds are not available for Event Fees. All youth participants are expected to pay the registration fee for each event they attend. It is customary for individual congregations to pay the registration fees for adult sponsors. In addition, financial concerns should never be the reason a youth decides not to attend an event.

Scholarship Assistance: Beginning in September 2011 the practice for scholarship assistance will be as follows: individuals will be expected to pay at least 1/3 of the event's registration fee, with assistance coming from their parish and the diocese. See the Scholarship Assistance Form for more information. Before contacting the Program Officer for scholarship assistance, please determine what assistance can be obtained through one's home parish. Again, financial concerns should never keep a young person from attending an event.

Travel to and from Diocesan Youth Events: It is the responsibility of the parents and youth leaders of a congregation to provide transportation to and from diocesan youth events. It is also the expectation that an adult will transport young people to and from these events. Rare exceptions should be made to this policy. If an exception must be made, it must be received in writing at least 3 full days prior to the event. Exceptions might include: 1) Young people who are under 18 are expected to have written permission from a parent or guardian to drive to an event, and 2) if young people are transporting other young people to and from a youth event, written permission must be provided for driver and passenger from a parent or guardian of the youth participant and a parent or guardian of the driver that identifies who is driving, who is being driven, and location they are being driven.

Sleeping accommodations: All diocesan youth events must provide 8 hours of scheduled time for sleep on all overnight events. It is never appropriate for two people to share a bed or other sleeping space (i.e. sleeping bag) designed for one person, or for a young person and an adult to share a bed. Males and females (both youth and adult) should sleep in separate rooms at all events and have separate access to bathroom facilities. It is desirable that youth and adults should have separate sleeping quarters, and, when possible, separate bathing facilities. If separate sleeping quarters for adults and youth are not possible, adults should sleep at a different end or side of the room.

Training & Oversight: Every Youth Event Design Team shall provide proper training for its design team and staff. Minor youth leading small groups will be supervised and accountable to adult leadership.

There will be a meeting of all Adult Participants at the beginning of EVERY Diocese of East Carolina Youth Event. This meeting will be lead by the Program Officer or another adult designated by the Program Officer.

Non-Negotiable Rules for ALL Participants at Diocese of East Carolina Youth Events

- No participant or leader may be in possession of or use alcohol, illegal and illicit drugs, or any tobacco products at a diocesan youth event. Any adult or youth in violation of this standard will be sent home immediately.
- Sexual relations or excessive displays of affection are strictly prohibited: no touching or exposure of the breast, buttocks or genitalia (this includes adult-to-adult, child/youth-to-child/ youth, and adult- to-child/youth behavior).
- There are to be no weapons, firearms or fireworks at any youth event