

# Susquehanna Conference

## Safe Sanctuaries Policies

### Supervision

Every ministry or event of the Susquehanna Conference that relates to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults in its programming or oversight shall provide conscientious supervision. These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of abuse to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults, and to protect the staff persons and volunteers from unwarranted accusations. These are the MINIMUM standards, and each event may adopt more stringent requirements as deemed reasonably appropriate.

1. Two non-related Adult Rule – Minimum supervisory standards will include the “Two non-related Adult Rule” The Two non-related Adult Rule requires that adults be 18 years of age or older. No matter the size of the group, two non-related adults (defined as two adults not residing in the same household) shall be present with participants at all times. These adults shall have completed the ministry screening process. One of the two adults may be a “roamer” who moves in and out of the rooms.
2. Five-Years-Older Rule – Every adult responsible for supervision shall be at least 18 years of age and at least five years older than the oldest child or youth event participant.
3. No child, youth, or vulnerable adult will be left unsupervised while attending a Susquehanna Conference sponsored event. In the event that child care/supervision services are not provided by the conference for a conference sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parent or legal guardian shall be fully responsible for their child(ren) during the event. In the event that supervised programming for youth/vulnerable adults is not provided by the conference for any conference sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parent or legal guardian shall be fully responsible for the supervision of their youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) during the event. Said child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) shall remain in the presence of their parent or legal guardian, and at no time be left alone and unsupervised. Should the parent or legal guardian arrange for their own child care/supervision of their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) for the Conference sponsored ministry event to occur within the event facility, said child care/youth/vulnerable adult supervision shall be in compliance with the *Safe Sanctuaries policies*. If parents/legal guardians refuse to comply with *Safe Sanctuaries policies* they and their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) will be asked to leave the event.
4. All activities should occur in open view. Each room or space where activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults occur shall have visibility from an interior hallway or a connecting room by means of a window, a door with an uncovered window, or an open door.
5. For outdoor programs or programs which occur in non-traditional settings that makes supervision challenging, the staff person or volunteer in charge of the event shall take extra appropriate measures to make sure that the setting is free of obvious safety hazards and suits the event and that the children, youth, and/or vulnerable adult are properly supervised.

6. Bathroom Needs. When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs, but should a child require assistance, the outer bathroom door will remain open while a volunteer or staff person assists the child, with an additional volunteer being present. For younger children, assistance will be provided. For elementary-age children, assistance should be limited to unfastening and fastening clothing. If more assistance is needed, parental permission should be received in advance. When accompanying a child to take care of his/her own bathroom needs, the volunteer or staff person will check the bathroom and stalls prior to the child entering the bathroom. Again, the outer bathroom door should be left open. A volunteer (who has not completed the screening process) should **never** provide assistance with bathroom needs. It is encouraged that with youth that there be a buddy system created to help ensure safety.
7. Event records for activities in which participants are outside of the direct supervision of their parents/legal guardians shall require the following:
  - a. **Activity Registration, Parental/Legal Guardian Permission, and Signed Emergency Medical Release** – including participant’s name, address, birthday, parent/legal guardian information, telephone number, emergency contact information, pertinent information about the participant such as medical history and insurance information, are required. Permission for pictures to be taken and used in promotional material. These forms will be maintained and secured in a designated folder by the staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or event.
  - b. **All participants who can understand a covenant shall enter into a signed Participation Covenant.** In a facility or site that has continuous care; clear, posted rules shall be explained to the participants and their parents/legal guardians at the outset of the program.
  - c. **Off-Site Activities** – Persons coordinating off-site events will assure every participant has completed the appropriate forms, and will take copies of these forms along on the event in a folder marked “Emergency Forms.”
  - d. **Accurate participation records** shall be maintained for all conference events or events involving children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults by the staff person or volunteer supervising the event. At a minimum, these records will list the date and hours of the event, its location, the names of the participants as they sign in and out of an event (including whether any were dismissed early and the times of such dismissals), and the names of all adults directly involved in the ministry or event, as well as any other volunteers on site that day.
8. **Staff/Leader Supervision** – the following **minimum ratios** will be maintained for **on-site activities** (in addition to the Two Non-related Adult Rule – see #1, Two Non-related Adult Rule):
  - a. Nursery through children two years old – 1:4 (one adult to every four children).
  - b. Children 3-4 years-old activities – 1:6 (one adult to every six children).
  - c. Kindergarten through grade 6 – 1:8 (one adult to every eight children).
  - d. Youth 7-12 grade – 1: 10 (one adult to every ten youth).
  - e. Special Needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).
  - f. Vulnerable adults – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).

**Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.**
9. **Media** – Written permission must be obtained from a parent/legal guardian prior to posting photos of children, youth, or vulnerable adults on a website or in other public locations, and names will not be included. This permission may be obtained as part of the Event Registration form (see 7a., Activity Registration).
10. **If a participant requests to speak privately with an adult**, the adult will ensure that the adult and the participant are visible to others while talking, even though they may not be heard.

## 11. Off-Site and Overnight Events/Activities

- a. The following **minimum ratios** will be maintained for **off-site events** (in addition to the Two Non-related Adult Rule – see #1, above): In co-ed groups, both male and female adults must be present.
  - i. Nursery through 2 years old – 1:3 (one adult to every three children).
  - ii. Children 3-4 years-old – 1:3 (one adult to every three children).
  - iii. Kindergarten through grade 6 – 1:5 (one adult to every five children).
  - iv. Youth 7-12 grade – 1:8 (one adult to every eight youth).
  - v. Special needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).
  - vi. Vulnerable adults – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons).

**Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.**

- b. Advance notice will be given to parents/legal guardians prior to events, and will include: date, time, and location, the means of transportation, and a summary of activities and events. Specific parental/legal guardians approval for off-site / overnight events is required. Should details of an event's start/end time change (or other pertinent information change), the event's coordinator is to have a plan for notifying parents/legal guardians. Changes in transportation plans should be communicated with parents as well.
- c. Events attended by child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adults(s) of both genders must be adequately chaperoned by adults of both genders.
- d. All medications and medication instructions shall be given to a designated adult prior to the trip for disbursement as appropriate, and will be enclosed in its original container (including prescription medications). [Exception: Epipens and inhalers may be carried by child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s), with the understanding that they will be secured and out of sight unless needed. Due to the nature of these medications, adult leaders will be aware that the child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) is carrying medication, and will be familiar with how to use an Epipen and inhaler in case of emergency]
- e. Appropriate buddy systems, check-in times, and appropriate male and female adult supervision need to be established for each ministry or event. The staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or event will assure the setting (and any equipment used) is appropriate for the event, and by implementing the above-named measures, will minimize risk of incident or injury to all participants. Events where direct adult supervision of child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) is not feasible (e.g. *Creation*, amusement parks, youth rallies and other large-group public events) will, at the minimum, incorporate a 3-5-person buddy system and check-in for all participants as part of appropriate adult supervision.
- f. Drivers to and from events must have completed the appropriate forms (see "Screening Procedures" section for details). Drivers must be a minimum of 25 years of age or older. If the Two Non-related Adult Rule is not feasible to maintain, drivers will make reasonable effort to not transport less than two (2) participants at a time. Each vehicle should have a first aid kit, and one (1) seatbelt per occupant. Drivers will practice safe driving procedures such as assuring that all passengers remain properly secured throughout the trip, and by obeying all posted speed laws and regulations. The event's coordinator should provide as necessary any appropriate maps, directions, and emergency contact numbers to each driver, as well as a communication plan for contacting assistance should an emergency arise.
- g. It is recommended that event coordinators attempt to secure at least one (1) adult with current certification in First Aid and CPR for each trip or event, and that all adult leadership participating in the trip or event is aware of the identity of such person(s).
- h. For overnight children/youth/vulnerable adult events:
  - i. There will be separate sleeping areas for males and females.

- ii. At least two adults will be present in each sleeping area, and will be of the same gender as the children/youth/vulnerable adult in that area.
- iii. Sleeping areas should be pre-arranged by staff person or event coordinator prior to event.
- iv. Random and regular rounds will be conducted by two (2) adult leaders (of the opposite sex) throughout the nighttime sleeping hours of all sleeping areas.
- v. Separate shower and bathrooms facilities are highly encouraged. When separate facilities are not possible, procedures for use of the facility will be conveyed to all event participants by the staff person or event coordinator.
- vi. If children/youth/vulnerable adults are found to be in violation of the Participation Covenant, the situation will be handled by the staff person or event coordinator as deemed appropriate. Said action may result in the parent/legal guardian(s) of the participant being notified regardless of the time of day/night, and the participant may be required to leave the event.

Adults must respect the privacy of children/youth/vulnerable adult, during such situations as changing, showering, etc., and should intrude only to the extent that health or safety may require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations as well.