

# Policies for Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Youth Ministry Events

## General

- It is the synod's recommendation that all adults, who are designated congregational youth leaders, complete national criminal/child abuse clearance checks. It is required that all adults who participate in a synodical overnight event complete such clearances. A copy of these reports must be presented to the synod upon the group's registration for an event. The synod is not responsible for any fees. The synod's preferred providers are IntelliCorp and ChoicePoint (Volunteer Select Plus). Discounted rates for ELCA congregations and/or non-profits are available from both providers. More information on these preferred companies is available from the Youth Ministry Specialist and/or online at [www.sepayouth.org](http://www.sepayouth.org). If an individual chooses to use another company for background checks the results of both the **criminal and child abuse checks** must be **clearly reported** in the report provided to the synod. The synod reserves the right to refuse any checks not done through one of the preferred providers. We suggest that the congregation keep these records on file as well. All information received is confidential and will not be shared with others in the congregation or synod. A person needs to submit these forms only once, as long as their membership remains in the same congregation, as the forms will be filed at the synod office for future use. The synod does recommend, however, that clearances are redone every three years.
- A minimum ratio of one adult per seven youth must be maintained for all overnight events. For example, fifteen youth registering for an event requires three adults to attend. This ratio requirement must hold true for each sex as well, due to separation of sexes for sleeping arrangements.
- There should be no one on one contact between a youth and adult except in view of other adults and youth. If confidential conversation needs to occur, it should be done in proximity to the rest of the group.
- Youth events are to function with an open-door policy which states that visitors of either sex who are attending the youth gathering may visit friends in their room during free time if the door to the room is left open and if all roommates agree to the visitor being there. Adults have a right to observe any youth activity at any time.
- Any kind of illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco use by youth at a synodical youth event is strictly prohibited. Adults are prohibited from using illicit drugs and alcohol at a synodical youth event. Tobacco products, used only by adults, can not be used in front of youth and/or during activities of an event. Adults must also maintain proper supervision of their youth at all times.
- There are to be no weapons, firearms, laser pointers or fireworks at any youth event.
- Adults and youth who feel they must have access to their cell phones, beepers, are to keep the instruments on silent and only use devices responsibly and during designated free time. Use of cell phone cameras, and other small recording devices is prohibited in private areas.
- Physical discipline is never an option. No one is to strike or hit anyone at any time. Verbal harassment or threats are also not to be tolerated.

## Transportation\*

- Only drivers aged 21 or over and have a valid license for three or more years are permitted to transport youth during any synodical youth event.
- All drivers for synodical events must have and provide a photocopy of a valid driver's license and qualify for the vehicle being operated.
- They must provide proof of vehicle insurance for the vehicle being driven.
- Seat belts must be worn by all passengers in vehicles which are equipped with seat belts.
- All state traffic laws must be observed.
- It is recommended that an adult never be alone with a youth or with two or more youth from the same family in a vehicle. If this is necessary, verbal permission must be given from the parent/guardian.

- Each vehicle used during a major synodical event (i.e. Helping Hands Day, the FLY gathering) must carry medical forms for all passengers.
- According to Pennsylvania State Law, no child 12 years old and under is allowed in the front seat of a vehicle.
- Drivers should check with their congregational policy on transportation and adhere to other restrictions or qualifications noted in such policies (example: minimum age of insured drivers, 12 or 15 passenger van limitations).

\* These transportation policies are in affect for drivers from the time they arrive at the event to the time they leave the event.

## Medical

- A person certified in First Aid and CPR must be present for synod youth ministry events.
- All efforts will be made to ensure the presence of a medical professional at all overnight events
- A well-equipped and fully stocked First Aid kit must be available and maintained at all functions.
- Permission must be obtained for minors to receive over the counter medication from the event First Aid Station.
- When specified by the synod, a medical release form must be provided and fully completed for each participant of a synodical youth event. The following information is required: a photocopy of participant's medical insurance card, the name of any medications that the participant is currently as well as the dosage and frequency each drug is taken, dietary concerns and allergies.

## Rooming

- It is preferred that youth and adults are not roomed together. If they must be, there must be at least two adults and at least two youth in each housing area.
- There will be no rooming of mixed genders, excluding married couples. In large room accommodations male and female sleeping areas are to be clearly defined.

## Registration

- The event name, location, phone number and dates will be listed in registration materials.
- Completed event registration forms must designate the contact person and adult leaders for the congregation.
- Special individual concerns should be communicated to the event planner (Youth Ministry Specialist) and/or the Registrar and be included on the medical release form.
- All youth, adults and event staff are required to agree and sign the Covenant for any synodical youth event.
- For synodical youth ministry event purposes a youth is considered any person in grades 6-12 when he/she registers for an event.

# MEDICAL RELEASE AND GENERAL PERMISSION FORM

Please complete fully. Write "none" if a particular section does not apply to the participant.

Name of Participant (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age at event \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Physician's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital/Clinic and Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. Participant is allergic to (including food): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please list any restrictions on diet or exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the participant have any special needs or medical history? If so, please list:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are there any over the counter medications the participant can not receive?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the participant on regular medication? If so, please list the drugs, dosages, frequency and any instructions:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please note that no drugs are to be brought to youth events other than those listed above**

## RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS

In consideration of being accepted by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA for participation in youth ministry events,

I (we) do for myself (ourselves) and on behalf of my child/participant do hereby release, forever discharge, and agree to forever hold harmless the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA, the employees, and agents thereof, from any and all liability, claims and demands for personal injury, sickness and death, as well as property damage and expenses of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by me or my child/participant resulting from said child's participation in the synod sponsored youth events, including travel, recreation and all associated activities.

Further, I (we) (and on behalf of our child/participant under 18 years of age) hereby assume all risk of said personal injury, sickness, death, damage and expenses as a result of participation as above set forth. I also understand that staff and volunteers are not responsible for the administration of prescribed medication and I (we) have made private arrangements for any medication taken on a daily schedule by my child/participant.

I (we) am (are) the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of this participant, and hereby grant my (our) permission for him/her to participate fully in said youth events, and give my (our) permission to take said participant to a doctor or hospital, share the above medical information and authorize medical treatment, including, but not limited to emergency surgery or medical treatment, and assume responsibility of all medical bills incurred by my child.

I (we) give permission for the participant to receive over the counter medication such as Tylenol, ibuprofen, antidiarrheal medication, antibacterial ointment, throat lozenges, eye wash solution, and the like.

I (we) also release the participant's name as part of an information database for the synod and ELCA related entities. I (we) also grant the synod and ELCA unrestricted rights to use, alter, and reproduce any images (still and video) from the event, in any medium without compensation.

Parent's/Guardian's signature (if participant is registering as a youth): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature (if registering as adult participant): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

# COVENANT

As a participant of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's event name, date, I agree to:

- † **Show respect** for myself and all other participants of this event as well as the facility staff and property,
- † **Participate** in all parts of the weekend,
- † **Youth - NOT bring or use alcohol or other non-prescribed drugs** including tobacco products; **Adults -NOT use alcohol or other non-prescribed drugs**. NOT use tobacco products in front of youth or while an activity of the event is going on,
- † **Abide by curfew times** and quiet hours,
- † **Not use offensive language**
- † **Not engage in sexual activity**
- † **Follow the open door policy** which states that visitors of either gender who are attending the youth gathering may visit friends in their room during free time if the door to the room is left open and if all roommates agree to the visitor being there.
- † **Keep my cell phone on silent** during all activities of the event.

† **HAVE FUN!**

A warning will be given for breaking the covenant about:

Respecting others                      Curfew                      Participation in the event                      Language                      Open door policy

The participant will be sent home and/or suspended from future synodical events for repeatedly breaking the covenant items above or the following:

Illegal Drugs, alcohol or tobacco products                      Sexual activity

The synodically designated adult in charge of the event will make all decisions concerning sending anyone home. If a participant is to be sent home, he or she will be financially responsible for any costs incurred.

Participant's name \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to live in this covenant for this event. I understand the consequences if I choose to break this covenant.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parental/Guardian signature (if participant is registered as a youth) \_\_\_\_\_