

Adequate Adult Supervision

Help Sheet

This guide is not intended as a substitute for the Safeguarding God's Children: Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth. References to relevant sections in the policies are provided for your convenience.

Two (and Three) Adults Rule

1. For **on-site activities**, minors shall be supervised by at least **two unrelated Qualified Adults who are at least two years older** than the eldest child or youth participant. (*Section III.D*) An adult is defined as being over 18, out of high school, and not a Vulnerable Adult. (*Section I.A*)
 - Only one Qualified Adult may be sufficient in a well-monitored, visually accessible program space provided that another Qualified Adult can maintain frequent visual contact with the lone adult. (*Section III.D*)
2. For **off-site activities** other than travel (as defined in *Section I.C*), there must be at least two unrelated Qualified Adults, with one being **age 25 or older**. (*Section V.B*)
3. For **travel** (as defined in *I.C*), at least **three** unrelated Qualified Adults must chaperone the trip, with **one being age 25 or older**. (*Section V.E*)

Adult to Child Ratios (*Section III.H* and *Section V.B*)

1. **Schools or camps** that are accredited or licensed may observe the adult to child ratio as established by the accrediting or licensing agency.
2. For **any other program or activity except travel**, the minimum ratio of adult to children or youth is:
 - Infants (0-11 mo.), 1:3
 - 1-5 years, 1:5 for overnight participants and 1:6 for day participants
 - 6-8 years, 1:6 overnight and 1:8 day
 - 9-14 years, 1:8 overnight and 1:10 day
 - 15-18 years, 1:10 overnight and 1:12 day
3. For **travel** (as defined in *Section I.C*), the minimum ratios increase as follows:
 - 9-14 years, 1-5
 - 15-18 years, 1:7

Other General Rules

1. If **unanticipated circumstances result in an adult's being alone with children or youth**, that adult shall report those circumstances to the Responsible Person, Supervisor, Clergy in Charge, or Head of Organization as soon as possible. (*Section III.G*)

2. **The Two Adult Rule is not met by two Qualified Adults who are related to each other as immediate family members (including relationships by marriage).** Related persons may minister together if at least one other Qualified Adult is present. (*Section III.E*)
3. One of the Qualifying Adults must be designated as the **Responsible Person** by the Program Supervisor. (*Section III.C*) See [Responsible Person Help Sheet](#).

Additional Rules for Private Activities: Restrooms, Locker Rooms, Showers, or Diapering

1. Although no adult may shower, bathe, or use restroom facilities in the presence of children or youth, **children and youth must be supervised at all times** to prevent peer abuse, even during private activities. When supervising or assisting private activities, adults will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs. (*Section III.K.2*)
2. **Diapering** must be done at diapering stations in proximity to other care providers and not behind closed doors or in isolated places. (*Section III.K.4*)
3. **Appropriate Restroom Supervision** (*Section III.K.5*)
 - a. **Age Two through 5th Grade**
 - i. If the restroom is attached to the classroom or activity room and has only one toilet, the child may go alone.
 - ii. If the restrooms are located away from the activity or classroom, follow the “rule of three”: two Personnel (at least one of whom must be a Qualified Adult), or one Qualified Adult and at least one other child or youth, should accompany the child to the restroom. Personnel must check the restroom to see if other adults are present before allowing the child to go in. If the restrooms are in a public space and the absence of other adults cannot be achieved, Personnel must be especially vigilant about the safety of the child.
 - iii. In a restroom without a stall for the toilet, a Qualified Adult should stand outside the restroom door while the child uses the toilet. In a restroom with a stall, a Qualified Adult should remain outside the stall. If the child requires assistance in using the toilet in a restroom without a stall, then a Qualified Adult may assist the child while leaving the outside door propped open. If the child requires assistance in using the toilet in a restroom with a stall, the stall door must be propped open while a Qualified Adult is assisting the child. When possible, the outside door should be propped open as well.
 - b. **Youth in 6th through 12th grades**
 - i. Youth may go alone to the restroom if the restroom is adjacent to the classroom or activity room or only a short distance away, but groups of adolescents must always be supervised in the restroom. Supervision includes a Qualified Adult who stand just outside the door of a restroom and verbally make their presence known or Qualified Adults who make frequent and random checks of activity within the restroom.
 - ii. If restrooms are located some distance away from the activity or classroom, follow the “rule of three:” two Personnel (at least one of whom must be a Qualified Adult) and one youth, or one Qualified Adult and at least one other youth, should accompany the youth to the restroom.

- c. **Special needs or extenuating circumstances.** When appropriate, a specific policy may be formulated, approved by the Head of Organization and a parent or guardian of the child or youth, and implemented with appropriate monitoring and supervision. If assistance is needed in formulating such a policy, contact the [Safeguarding Minister](#).

Rules for Transporting Children and Youth (Section V. C)

1. If the off-site event originates and/or terminates at the facility of the organization:
 - All **drivers** must be at least **21 years of age** and provide proof of insurance, and a current driver's license appropriate to the vehicle, which information must be kept on file by the organization, along with the driver's contact information. It is recommended but not required that the driver have a satisfactory DMV records check to be kept on file by the organization.
 - When transporting children or youth, two adults must be in each vehicle, except when multiple vehicles travel in a caravan. A roster of children assigned to drivers must include names and contact numbers for all adults and be provided to all drivers.
2. Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children or youth to and from the facility of the organization or directly to off-site events that do not originate and terminate at the facility. This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.

Additional Rules for Overnight Events (Section V.D)

1. When more than one gender is participating in overnight activities, it is recommended that both **male and female Qualified Adults** be present. Exceptions may be made after consultation with the Safeguarding Minister.
2. Sleeping arrangements must be safe and supervised. **No bed, cot, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.** But children and youth may sleep in separate sleeping bags on top of the same bed.
3. Supervision by two unrelated Qualified Adults is required in any space where one or more youth or children are sleeping unless
 - the children or youth are participating in a program that meets the licensing requirements to which it is subject, or
 - the Safeguarding Minister approves in writing an alternative arrangement.
4. All participants may sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.
5. When children or youth who are at risk for being excluded or stigmatized request special accommodations, their requests merit careful consideration.
6. It is recommended that in the case of a **hotel stay**,
 - there be at least three children or youth per room and that consideration be given to the relative age and size of the children or youth,

- Qualified Adults have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevator, and
- the Responsible Person assigns the rooms and room occupants.

Additional Rules for Travel (Section V.E and)

1. The **Responsible Person** shall be **at least age 25** and be responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation and cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies. See [Responsible Person Help Sheet](#).
2. It is recommended but not mandatory that one Qualified Adult at least 25 years old hold a current medical certification to manage administration of necessary and permissible medications, first aid, and to triage medical situations to determine if an individual needs a higher level of care.

Special Considerations for Online Interactions

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant increased online interaction with children and youth, especially in school settings. Generally, the Two-Adults rule still applies, with the same exceptions being made for accredited programs that are made for in-person settings.

1. Social Media (Section III.L):

Ministry presence on social media platforms should have more than one adult administrator.

- Supervision of **Online Groups** should follow the same Safeguarding policies as all other diocesan entities.

2. Online Learning

In online instruction, utilize the principle of two-deep leadership, that is, classes should be “observable and interruptible” by another adult.

- a. For both group instruction and one-on-one tutoring with minors, obtain **parental approval** in advance, **including approval for recording** the online instruction.
- b. If the online platform allows a **private chat function** among participants, take appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of bullying or verbal peer abuse, including setting standards of behavior, encouraging reporting, and, monitoring such chat when possible.
- c. When engaging in **one-on-one online tutoring** with a minor,
 - Hold all tutoring sessions on a professional account.
 - Schedule all tutoring sessions in advance on a calendar available to both the child and the parent with links to the meeting that are available to both.
 - Have a parent or adult caregiver in the home who is physically available and able to observe the session casually in person or who is virtually present and able to observe the session casually online, OR
 - Have a second Qualified Adult who can observe the session in person (by being

on-site with the tutor) or virtually, by being able to observe the session casually online, OR

- record the entire session and promptly provide parents and program Supervisors with links to time-stamped recordings.
- d. All online **communications should be documented** including date, start time, end time, agenda, names of participating adults and names of participating children. Recordings may be utilized if permission has been obtained from the parents.

3. Virtual Coffee Hours or other Congregational Gatherings on Online Platforms

- Be mindful of online gatherings where unsupervised children and youth may be present, such as virtual coffee hours after worship.
 - It is recommended that at least one Qualified Adult monitor the event, or if the group is divided into virtual “rooms,” that one Qualified Adult monitor each room.
 - When possible, provide participants in advance with basic protocols for the gathering and include that children and youth should be supervised by a parent and that an adult participant who finds himself or herself alone with children or youth should promptly notify a person designated to receive such reports.
- For gatherings that are designed specifically for children or youth, like virtual Vacation Bible Camp or youth group, follow the same adult supervision rules as you would for in-person gatherings, taking into consideration the strategies used above to safeguard **Online Learning**.