

Steubenville on the Bayou

Chaperone Roles, Guidelines and Policies

These policies must be read by and discussed with ALL adult chaperones prior to attending the Steubenville on the Bayou Conference in Houma, LA.

The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux (Steubenville on the Bayou), along with Franciscan University would be unable to proclaim the good news to approximately 3,000 teens at our conference without dedicated and faithful disciples like you. We appreciate all you sacrifice and all you do to be a part of the Summer High School Conference. In today's state of heightened awareness, we not only want to protect young people, we want to protect the generous, caring adults like yourself who are willing to work to bring the love of Christ to young people.

Policies, Requirements & Roles of Adult Chaperones

1. ALL chaperones must be in compliance with the USCCB Charter for the protection of Children and Young People. Please check with your diocesan personnel office with questions regarding this matter. For more information on this, please visit: <http://www.nccbuscc.org>
2. **Age Requirement:** The age of chaperones must comply with the rules of your church parish or diocese; the minimum age being 21 (but recommended 24). *(Those who are 19-20 years old can volunteer for Mercy Crew or see "Junior Chaperone Guidelines" document.)*
3. **Health of Chaperones:** The conference weekend is very demanding physically. The conference has an intense schedule with long days and short nights, and there is loud music and large crowds. It is recommended that adults with serious health problems not participate as chaperones.
4. **Spirituality of Chaperones:** Because the conference is very spiritual and chaperones serve as primary facilitators of this experience, adult chaperones need to be spiritually mature. The words and actions of the adult chaperones should reflect the values of the Catholic Church at all times. It is highly recommended that chaperones be Catholic. Chaperones are asked to commit to daily prayer in preparation for the conference and the task of serving as a leader for the teens.
5. **Role & Responsibility of an Adult Chaperone:** Chaperones must be totally committed to following all of the conference policies and procedures. The primary role of the chaperone is to provide a safe and healthy environment for the youth participants.
 - Assisting the Group Leader in preparing the teens for the conference.
 - Chaperones may be asked to help with fundraising projects.
 - Full awareness and enforcement of the rules and policies governing participant behavior as set forth by Steubenville on the Bayou is mandatory. Adult chaperones are the primary disciplinarians and are responsible for their youth at all time, during sessions as well as free time.
 - Chaperones must attend the trainings/meetings set up by the Group Leader.
 - ATTEND A TRAINING, VIEW THE PROMO VIDEO, AND PREPARE SPIRITUALLY FOR THE TASK OF CHAPERONING. Group leaders may want to have a retreat, a training day, a weekly prayer meeting or something that provides support and encouragement to chaperones. Resource materials (including CD's) may be obtained upon request. Helps are also offered in the Group Leader Manual. Contact the office to receive a copy.
 - Chaperones should MEET WITH THEIR SMALL GROUPS at least two months before the conference. (This gives chaperones the opportunity to get to know the members of their group and also for the youth to get to know each other. This will begin to build trust.
 - Chaperones must learn all that they can about the youth they will be in charge of. Therefore, if the Group leader or another chaperone is aware of any issues with a young person such as drugs, alcohol, family problems, emotional issues, depression, and/or anything else that may help the chaperone to minister more effectively, they are asked to share this pertinent information with the adult responsible for that teen for the conference weekend.
 - Chaperones need to be aware of the physical, emotional and spiritual state and any special needs of their youth during the conference. Journeying with the youth prior to the conference and being present and engaged with the youth during free time and designated small group time during the conference will

greatly aid in this. Chaperones need to communicate any serious problems or issues to their group leader or conference staff.

- Chaperones need to be present with their youth at all times during scheduled sessions. The only exception is during the entertainment when youth ministers and chaperones meet. By experiencing the conference together, chaperones and youth will be able to talk about the different topics and issues. The chaperones will also be able to help young people with any confusion or doubts as well as pray with them.
 - Processing the sessions with the teens throughout the conference weekend.
 - Assisting the Group Leader in providing follow up after the conference.
6. **Providing a Safe Environment:** In order to protect the youth as well as the adult chaperones, housing sites will be closed during the day. If the need arises that a youth must return to the housing site, conference staff should be contacted and appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that everyone is kept safe. Adult chaperones should avoid all situations where they are alone with a youth at any given time.
 7. **Appropriate Dress:** All participants (youth and adults) are expected to dress in fashion that represents modesty and good taste, respecting other participants and our Lord. Clothing must cover all undergarments and midriffs. Clothing that displays profane or offensive messages or images are not allowed. Violators will be asked to change clothing at the discretion of conference staff.
 8. **First Aid:** For any medical or health issue, all participants will be directed to First Aid. This includes migraines, asthma and exhaustion. All youth in need of First Aid must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.
 9. **Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco:** All state laws governing alcohol, drugs and tobacco will be strictly enforced. Possession or consumption of alcohol and drugs is not permitted at any time during the conference. All buildings are smoke-free. Outdoor smoking is allowed only in designated areas.
 10. **Insubordination:** All youth and adult chaperones are expected to follow the direction of security and conference staff. Any instances of lack of cooperation or insubordination will be subjected to appropriate discipline and/or fines. Disciplinary action will be directed primarily through interaction with the Group Leader.
 11. **Reporting of Incidence:** If you witness any youth or chaperone violating any policy in regard to Child Protection or the Partnership for Youth's guidelines and policies, you are required to report it immediately to a member of the conference staff.

Guidelines for Adult Chaperones

Here are simple guidelines for you to follow that will assist us in providing a safe environment for ALL participants at our youth conference. Thanks again for your service and know that you are in our prayers.

1. **Do** attend a training, view the Promo Video, and prepare spiritually for the task of chaperoning prior to the conference.
2. **Do** become familiar with the Participant Modesty Policy and Expectations so that you can help the youth in your group to make good choices and prepare prior to the conference.
3. **Do** act as a role model reflecting the values of the Catholic Church and the love of Jesus Christ.
4. **Do** speak and act with respect and regard for the value, personhood, and uniqueness of each youth in your group.
5. **Do** maintain clear communication throughout the weekend with your Group Leader especially in regard to the interaction you have with any youth in your care.
6. **Do** immediately report to your group leader any strange, embarrassing, or possibly compromising interactions you have with any youth in your care.
7. **Do** listen carefully to the youth under your care. Be aware of and report to your group leader any conversations that reveal any self-destructive, suicidal or harmful thoughts and behaviors.
8. **Do** use discretion with physical displays of emotion or care. This includes everything from hugging to simply touching someone on his or her arm or shoulder. We communicate more from non-verbal cues than through words. Hugs carry many different connotations for different youth.
9. **Do Not** try to be a buddy or pal to the youth. You are there to help them grow, not to develop a social life around or with them. This is especially important if you are involved with long-term ministry after the conference.
10. **Do Not** be alone with a youth behind closed doors or any other place where you could possibly be compromised. If you wish to have a one-on-one conversation with a teen, stay in a public place.

11. **Do Not** use suggestive jokes, stories or language with youth. What they hear from their peers and laugh off could be devastating if it comes from your mouth.
12. **Do Not** threaten, humiliate, or degrade a teen as a form of discipline.
13. **Do Not** discipline with physical contact.
14. **Do Not** let your youth roam free without supervision.
15. **Do Not** share inappropriate information about yourself with your youth.
16. **Do Not** allow your teens to engage in sexually suggestive, vulgar or abusive speech.