

MEMO

TO: Campus Ministers at the University of Evansville, University of Southern Indiana, Vincennes University / Director of Outdoor Ministry & Camp Director, The Outpost / Community of Disciples Core Group: SWITEC / Fraternity Leadership: Communion and Liberation / Chaplain, Boy Scouts under Catholic auspices / Chaplain, Girl Scouts under Catholic auspices / Diocesan Adult Leadership for: Youth Day; National Catholic Youth Conference; World Youth Day

FROM: Michael H. Eppler, Director, Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation

DATE: March 28, 2001

RE: Weapons, Illegal Drugs, and Alcohol Policy

CC: Bishop Gettelfinger & Parish Youth Ministry Contacts

*This Memo and Policy is addressed ONLY to Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation Staff, Chaplains, and Directors of Campus Ministry. Parishes are **not required** to follow these policies within the Parish Youth Ministry Plan – except when the parish participates in a Diocesan sponsored function.*

Attached to this Memo, you will find a copy of the Weapons, Alcohol, and Drug Policy & Procedures for the Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation.

This Policy was developed in response to current experiences, both locally and globally, that have plagued adolescents. This country cannot afford to lose one more young person through violence, drugs, or alcohol. Circumstances that occurred within the activities of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation have caused us to formulate these policies and procedures.

READ THEM. Practice them. Make sure that youth AND adults who are participating in your diocesan function are aware of these rules and their consequences.

Call me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

This policy is effective immediately.

Weapons, Alcohol, and Drug Policy & Procedures

Policy: The Departments, Agencies, Movements, and Programs of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation² will have a zero tolerance policy for the possession of weapons and alcoholic beverages; or the possession or use of illegal drugs while participating in a diocesan sponsored event or movement activity.

Weapons : The possession of any type of firearm, large knives (3” or longer blade), incendiary device, bomb, chemical that could be used maliciously, or other items deemed threatening by the adult leader in charge of the event, will not be tolerated. Anyone who brings a weapon to a youth function will not be allowed further participation in ANY diocesan sponsored youth functions until review and approval by the Director, Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation. A “Weapon” is ANY item that the adult leader in charge deems to be usable in a malicious, threatening, injurious, or abusive manner.

Certain pocket knives and woodcraft tools are excluded if they are in the context of the Scouting movements or while under proper adult supervision while at the Outpost or other appropriate setting (but ONLY if they are not used in a threatening manner).

Procedures for responding to these circumstances:

- The weapon will be removed from the attendee – if that can be done safely. Authorities will be called immediately and parents (if the person is under age 18³) will be promptly notified. Attendee will be removed from the event immediately. Attendees removed under these circumstances may not return to the event, movement, or property until permission from the Diocesan Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation has been given.
- If it is the use in a threatening manner of a weapon or the threat of possession of a weapon – even if the person has a legal permit to carry a concealed weapon, contact the local authorities immediately. (See below for a “*threat assessment*”).
- Possession of a firearm at a youth function is not appropriate – even if the person has a permit to carry a concealed weapon. Have the person leave the event. Contact the Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation.
- Fill out an incident / accident report form.
- Contact the Director, Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation at the Catholic Center or the Executive Director of Diocesan Services.

¹ This policy will be limited only to the programs, activities, and functions of the Department. It will not bear upon parishes – except in their participation in diocesan events.

² Including, but not limited to, Catholic Campus Ministry at the University of Evansville, University of Southern Indiana, and Vincennes University; The Outpost Youth Camp; Teens Encounter Christ; Communion and Liberation; Boy Scout functions under Catholic auspices; Girl Scout functions under Catholic auspices; Youth Day(s); diocesan participation in the National Catholic Youth Conference; diocesan participation in World Youth Day; or any other program offered through the Diocese of Evansville for the benefit of adolescents and young adults.

³ Age, for the purpose of this policy, is only for parental notification.

Illegal Drugs: The possession or use of any chemical compound that is intentionally misused will not be tolerated. ALL prescription drugs must be turned over to the leader of an event at the beginning of the event and there must be parental permission for the distribution of prescription medication (*see* Waiver, Release, Liability Form). Adult Leaders must keep prescription drugs locked during an event.

Procedures for responding to these circumstances:

- Authorities will be called immediately and parents (if the person is under age 18) will be promptly notified. The illegal drug will be removed from the attendee – if that can be done safely. If the adult leader suspects that the person has ingested a drug, contact authorities. If the person is under age 18, contact parents. Do not let someone who is under the influence of drugs drive a vehicle. Attendee will be removed from the event immediately. Attendees removed under these circumstances may not return to the event, movement, or property until permission from the Diocesan Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation has been given.
- Fill out an incident / accident report form.
- Contact the Director, Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation at the Catholic Center or the Executive Director of Diocesan Services.

Alcoholic Beverages: Any alcoholic beverage (except sacramental wine used in the context of Mass) is not permitted.

Procedures for responding to these circumstances:

- Authorities will be called immediately and parents (if the person is under age 18) will be promptly notified. The alcohol will be removed from the attendee – if that can be done safely. If the person is under age 18, contact parents. Attendee will be removed from the event immediately. If the adult leader in charge suspects that the person is intoxicated, contact the authorities. Do not let a drunk person drive. Attendees removed under these circumstances may not return to the event, movement, or property until permission from the Diocesan Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation has been given.
- Fill out an incident / accident report form.
- Contact the Director, Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation at the Catholic Center or the Executive Director of Diocesan Services.

Good Risk Management Techniques to be followed for Diocesan sponsored functions :

- **Read these techniques and practice them BEFORE you have to use them!**
- All attendees under age 18 must have a completed, signed, and dated Waiver, Release, Liability Form that includes a line for the distribution of prescription medications;
- If an attendee makes a threat of violence (even if you cannot see a weapon) take the threat seriously and contact authorities and the parents (if applicable). Remove the attendee from the event – if that can be done safely.

**Threat Assessment: (a “yes” to any question requires contact of the authorities.)
The Adult in charge must make the assessment about threats using these criteria:**

1. Does the person have the means to do bodily harm?
2. Does the person have access to a weapon?
3. Is there the **remote** possibility that this attendee could follow through with his or her threat?

- Anyone who brings a weapon, illegal drugs, or alcohol to a youth function will not be allowed to participate in ANY diocesan sponsored youth functions until review and approval by the Director, Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation. The ONLY exception to this requirement is the invitation of a police officer to make a presentation to a youth group while he or she is on duty.
- ALWAYS complete an Accident / Incident Report form;
- ALWAYS contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation;
- **Know your adult leadership team:**
 1. Accept only adults you know and trust;
 2. Be clear with adults about rules, expectations, and consequences;
 3. Run Criminal Checks on your adults through the Indiana State Police; (see attached form)

The Criminal Check is a CONFIDENTIAL matter. All forms should be sent to the Office of Youth & Young Adult Formation for processing. This Office can also assist you in running criminal background checks.
- Explain these rules and consequences at the start of every youth function;
- There must be two-deep leadership (two adults over age 21 who are in eye-sight of each other at all times during a youth event)
- There must be a 1 – 10 adult to youth ratio for high school adolescents and a 1 – 8 adult to youth ratio for junior high events.
- If you ever have a question about how to proceed, contact the Director, Office of Youth and Young Adult Formation or the Executive Director of Diocesan Services.

Emergency Contact Numbers :

If in doubt, call 911. Then call:

Michael H. Eppler
 Director, Office of Youth
 and Young Adult Formation
 (w) (812) 424-5536 ext. 227
 or (800) 637-1731
 Pager: (812) 433-3714
 Home: (812) 867-6392 (emergency ONLY)

OR

Kenneth Krasavage
 Executive Director,
 Diocesan Services
 (w) (812) 424-5536
 or (800) 637-1731