

## Policy for Group-Sponsored Youth Activities in Northshield

### I. General:

We in Northshield expect our young people to be great warriors, great leaders and great workers. They are not just our future, but also a vital part of our present. The responsibility to guide them in this process belongs to their parents. The role of the Youth Minister is to assist parents in this goal by organizing interesting and relevant age and ability appropriate Group-Sponsored Youth Activities that parents may choose to let their children participate in, and by finding the necessary instructors and activity leaders to run these activities.

Group-Sponsored Youth Activities are not baby-sitting or day-care services.

It is, at all times, the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian of a minor to determine the safety, suitability and appropriateness of an activity to their dependent children.

Group-Sponsored Youth Activities shall be organized to have at least two adults present, except for brief periods (such as bathroom breaks), emergencies, and unusual circumstances.

Participation in Group-Sponsored Youth Activities is based on the cooperative relationship between the Minister of Youth, the Activity Coordinator, the participating youth and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the participating youth. Participation is not a right but a privilege that is extended and must be respected by all parties.

Parents or children whose behavior or actions violate these policies or whose participation is disruptive may not be allowed to participate in future Group-Sponsored Youth Activities.

Inappropriate behavior of any sort by any party involved in Group-Sponsored Youth Activities will be dealt with in the manner deemed most appropriate in accordance with modern, corporate or kingdom law as applicable.

The Youth Minister is a deputy of the Seneschal. Questions or concerns about these policies should be brought up at the appropriate level with the Seneschallate.

These policies are intended to cover non-martial activities. Participation by Youth in approved Martial activities are defined elsewhere, and are supervised by the Marshallate.

### II. Responsibilities of the Minister of Youth:

- a. To establish and oversee Kingdom Youth activities outside of martial endeavors.
- b. To keep local officers and the Seneschallate notified of relevant changes to the office
- c. To facilitate communications between all other youth-oriented offices
- d. To be responsible for all official Northshield youth-related web sites
- e. To oversee and aid local group officers in organizing Activities for Minors

- f. To encourage interesting and appropriate activities for youth
- g. To generally encourage appropriate youth participation in events and activities

### III. Policy on Supervision of Group-Sponsored Youth Activities:

Youth activity leaders are volunteers who are offering expertise in an activity or area of interest. They are not professional childcare providers, and the purpose of Group-Sponsored Youth Activities is not meant to be considered as childcare.

Parents who wish their children to participate in Group-Sponsored Youth Activities must ensure that their children have adequate supervision, as required by the locality where the activity is taking place.

#### III A. General guidelines:

Parents shall always sign a permission form for their children to participate in Group-Sponsored Youth Activities.

These forms shall be specific to the site of the activity, but may cover a range or list of specific dates at one site.

(regular periodic activities at a given site, or all activities at a given event may be covered by one form).

It is possible that specific activities, at the request of the activity coordinator, may require a separate form.

Participation in activities may be limited by the Youth Minister or Activity Coordinator to specific age ranges or numbers of participants.

#### III. B. Age-Specific Guidelines:

The exact guidelines for supervision of children are set by individual counties or municipalities, so the requirements for specific events or activities may be more strict than the guidelines listed here.

Parents are responsible to check with the Youth Minister to make sure they are familiar with the rules in force at any given event.

In general the following are suggested minimums:

Parents of children under 6 are required to arrange for someone to attend the activity with their children. This may be a designated adult or an age-appropriate babysitter.

Parents of children 6-9 are required to either arrange for someone to attend the activity

with their children, or are responsible to keep the activity supervisor informed of their whereabouts, and to check in at least every 3 hours, or as required by the activity coordinator.

Parents may give their consent for children age 6-9 to leave the activity on their own (i.e. to go volunteer, or to leave to meet their parents). However, such permission must be explicitly given.

Parents of children 10 and older may choose to let their children participate at will in activities up to eight hours in duration. If the activities will last longer than eight hours, and the parent cannot check in periodically, the parent must arrange for someone to attend the activity with their children.

Parents of children 10 and over whose children are allowed to attend at will must realize that their children may choose to leave the activity area to participate in other aspects of the event.

With parents of children 10 and over, if the parent lets the child come to the activity on their own, it will be assumed that the child can leave on their own as well.

### III. C Non-parental Supervisors

The appropriate ages for babysitters depends on how long the child will be in their care. These rules vary by county or municipality, but the following guidelines are suggested minimums for supervision of younger children attending Group-Sponsored Youth Activities

Babysitter age Time

10-14 for four hours

15 and older for eight hours

A babysitter or parent-approved supervisor can watch the children from one family, or up to four children if from different families.

### IV. Bathroom Breaks, Discipline Issues and other Emergencies:

Children attending Group-Sponsored Youth Activities are expected to be able to go the bathroom by themselves. If they need assistance or supervision to do so, the parent or the individual the parent designated to attend the activity with the child must assist the child.

Youth ministers and their deputies are not assumed to be Chirurgeons or trained medical personnel.

Youth ministers and their staff are required to be familiar with SCA and Kingdom policy on the medical treatment of minors. In case of any questions the staff should immediately consult the Chirurgeon in charge.

Youth Ministers and their volunteers may never be verbally or physically abusive in any way to children involved in activities they are running or use any form of corporal punishment during these activities even if a child is a discipline problem -- even if the parent gives explicit permission or tells the coordinator "it's okay."

Discipline issues include but are not limited to disrupting activities, running away from activities, being sulky, crying excessively, or being abusive in any way towards others present.

If a child is presenting a discipline problem, and there is no parent-designated responsible individual in immediate attendance at the activity, the second adult helper will immediately get the parent or legal guardian or return the child to them. The child is not to return until the child agrees to behave.

If a child is endangering him or herself or others or is engaged in a disruptive or abusive behavior, the child's parent or legal guardian will be approached and expected to handle the situation immediately. If problems persist with a child after the parent or legal guardian has been notified, the matter must be handled by the appropriate group Seneschal and/or autocrat.

## V. Waivers and permission to participate

As per SCA policy, all minors attending an event or activity are required to be accompanied to the event or activity by their parent, or to have a parental waiver which authorizes another adult who is attending to take responsibility for their children. Only the parent or legal guardian may fill out such a waiver.

If the child is attending with someone other than their parent or legal guardian, in addition to the copy of the waiver that must be given to the check-in staff at the event, a copy of this waiver should be carried by the responsible adult at the event, and must be shown to the Youth Activities coordinator when signing the child up to participate in Group-Sponsored Youth Activities.

As per SCA policy, the parent or one or more of the adults identified by the parent on an approved waiver must be on site at all times that the child is on site.

If for any reason the parent must leave site temporarily (i.e. to go to the store, or for any other reason), and the child will remain on site, there must be a waiver filled out identifying another adult who will be remaining on-site who is responsible for the child. This information must be filed with the event on the approved waiver form, so that the event staff may know who is responsible for the child in the absence of the parent.

If the child is participating or will participate in Group-Sponsored Youth Activities

during a temporary parental absence from site, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the Youth Activities coordinator that they will be leaving site, for how long, and fill out the appropriate completed waiver if this has not already been done.