



Group/Church Name: _____

Expectations for Protecting the Safety of Children and Other Vulnerable Guests

Adult-to-Child Ratios*

AMEN St. Louis requires a 1:5 adult:child ratio be maintained at all times. The sole exception to this rule is during service sites /classroom/workshop experiences, when a ratio of 1:10 is permitted.

In cases where groups include youth participants up to age 17, “adults” will be defined as those aged 21 or older. 18-year-olds in this case will be considered “youth” for purposes of determining the adult:child ratio.

AMEN St. Louis, visiting mission trip groups, and host organizations may not employ anyone less than three years older than the oldest youth participant as a supervisor/leader for group activities.

*Married/civilly-covenanted adults cannot be compelled to testify against one another in court. Because of this, married or otherwise legally-covenanted adult couples shall count as one adult for ratio purposes.

Bathrooms/House Bedrooms

The following are best practices for minimizing risk in bathrooms and other small shared spaces:

1. Minimize the presence of children from diverse age ranges in the same space at the same time. (Example: a 6-year-old and a 17-year-old using the same house bathroom at the same time.)
2. No adult leader (from AMEN St. Louis OR visiting groups) may enter a bathroom with a single, unrelated child unless the bathroom door is propped open in a way that she/he/they can be easily observed by others.
5. Adult leaders may not use house showers while child/youth participants are using house bathrooms (for showering or using toilets). Adult leaders must set aside time for showering during which there will be only adults in the bathroom (showers AND commodes).

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6. Adult group leaders are to frequently check house bathrooms and bedrooms to ensure they are safe and secure. This must be done in ways that do not violate other bathroom/bedroom expectations for safety (ie, in pairs or with other youth present).

Free Time Supervision

It is central to AMEN St. Louis's mission that guests have down time to process what they have done and learned. This time is valuable and may be spent any number of formative, creative, rejuvenating ways. At no time shall children and youth participants be in the house alone without adult supervision. For these purposes, remember that an "adult" may not be less than three years older than the oldest youth present. (Example: high school youth may not be left in the care of an 18-year-old group member.)

Transportation

In keeping with the tremendous responsibility to transporting children and youth in vehicles, the following expectations will apply:

1. No group leader may transport a single child that is not his/her/their own child, except as required by an emergency. In cases of emergency, the driving adult will be in frequent communication with another group leader and an AMEN St. Louis staff/volunteer leader.
2. All drivers of congregation-/organization-owned vehicles must have completed any training required by the visiting organization's insurance company.
3. Transportation seating will adhere to both safe loading limits of the vehicle in question AND the AMEN St. Louis adult:child ratio.
4. All passengers will be seated and buckled in safety belts (one person to one belt) during all driving.
5. Adult leaders will be seated in large vehicles in ways that allow them to supervise youth passengers.

Ministry Standards and Background Check Signature Form

I, _____, certify that I have received a copy of AMEN St. Louis's Expectations for Protecting the Safety of Children and Other Vulnerable Guests.

Signature

Date

Background Check Information

AMEN St. Louis STRONGLY SUGGESTS completing background checks on all adults (18 years and above) before joining us in St. Louis. We recommend a national or multi-state criminal background check rather than a county check. If your organization (congregation, etc.) has completed a national/multi-state check on any participating adults in the last THREE years, it is not necessary to complete a new check *for that individual*.

AMEN St. Louis has intentionally not set specific guidelines as to what background check information shall preclude an adult from participating in a mission trip with us. We expect your organization/congregation to review background checks and assume responsibility for determining what counts as a disqualifying offense. We DO NOT wish to see the results of your leaders' background checks. Please do not send them to us. Rather, we need to know which adults have had background checks completed and which have not.

Please list below all group members 18 years of age and older and indicate whether you have a current (last three years) national or multi-state background check on that individual.

_____ national/multi-state background check
completed: Y / N

_____ national/multi-state background check
completed: Y / N

_____ national/multi-state background check
completed: Y / N

_____ national/multi-state background check
completed: Y / N

_____ national/multi-state background check
completed: Y / N

_____ national/multi-state background check
completed: Y / N

I, _____ hereby certify that (name of organization) _____ accepts full legal responsibility for the actions of the adults listed above whether or not a national or multi-state criminal background check has been processed. I will not initiate legal action against AMEN St. Louis, Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy or any staff or volunteers of these institutions due to illegal behavior committed by any of our group's adult leaders (age 18 or older).

Signature _____

Date _____