



**The**  
**Mountaineers**  
www.mountaineers.org

# Working with Youth

Rev. October 2014

*A Resource and Manual for Mountaineers Staff and Volunteers  
working with youth*



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# How to Use this Manual

This manual is designed to be used as a guide and a resource for Staff and Volunteers working with youth in Mountaineers programs. Introducing Youth to the outdoors is a fun and rewarding experience. It is also a key aspect of our mission as an organization, and we encourage volunteers to discover the rewards of teaching youth about the outdoors. This manual is an educational tool that can help prepare volunteers for working with youth. It will help the reader understand the unique risks inherent to youth programming and how to minimize those risks. It is also a resource of ideas for successful programming.

Note: While we strongly prefer that leaders adhere to all of the practices in this manual, those including the language “expected”, “required”, or “must” are required procedures that must not be compromised unless an exception is specifically listed.



## Who needs to be a Qualified Youth Leader?

Anyone who volunteers with youth on a regular basis must be a Mountaineers Qualified Youth Leader. Volunteers (who are not the leaders) at public events that may include youth do not need to be Qualified Youth Leaders. Volunteers working with youth for the *first time* do not need to be Qualified Youth Leaders. Volunteers and leaders who help with *more than one* Youth Program, Family Program or Youth Partner Program must be Qualified Youth Leaders to continue volunteering with youth. Volunteers who are helping with an adult program that includes youth must be Qualified Youth Leaders if they will be instructing for otherwise working directly with the youth participant(s) on more than 25% of the class days.

## To be a Qualified Youth Leader:

1. Read the “About Youth” section.
2. Read the Mandated Reporter and Safe Supervision sections
3. Choose the type of program you’ll be helping with: Youth Programs, Family Programs, Youth in Adult Programs, Youth Partner Programs, or Special Events. Read that section.
4. Choose the type of activity you’ll be doing, and read that section.
5. Read any sections pertaining to specific circumstances of your activity (overnight considerations, transportation, etc)
6. Review the Youth Policies in the appendix
7. Email [info@mountaineers.org](mailto:info@mountaineers.org) to receive the Background Check agreement, followed by the Background Check





# About Youth...

Teaching youth in an outdoor setting can be one of the most rewarding ways to volunteer your time. Kids look up to their instructors and soak up everything they're being taught.

When working with youth, it's important to understand a little bit about what makes each age group unique, and what makes kids unique from adults. When you know what age group you'll be working, take a minute to review their typical developmental characteristics so that your teaching can match the students' social, emotional and cognitive readiness.

## First, some basics.

**Kids aren't what they seem.** It would be convenient if kids developed all aspects of themselves at the same time, but they don't. Remember the really smart kid who was shorter than everyone until 10<sup>th</sup> grade when she suddenly caught up? Our physical, emotional, social and cognitive selves don't develop in sync, which is what makes growing up even harder, and makes things confusing for adults! Add to that family expectations, school culture, and any extra-curricular activities a child does, and you never know what you're going to get. Two kids the same age may have very different cognitive abilities, social skills and emotional intelligences. Understanding that kids will be very different from one another is the first step to student-centered teaching.



**Kids make mistakes.** All the time. But they are also smart and want to be liked and respected, just like the rest of us. What does this mean?

- Start with a structured environment. Kids can feel in control and can be successful when they are given a structure that is clear and reasonable. Free play and free exploration can happen later, once a culture of structure has been set.
- Set clear boundaries and stick to them. When we are inconsistent with our expectations, it confuses kids and makes it impossible for them to do what's expected of them.
- Repeat instructions, and ask participants to repeat them back to you.
- Treat kids with respect, and expect the same from them. This includes using "please" and "thank you" as often as possible.
- Let kids know that you trust that they are capable. If a 10-year-old claims they know how to tie a climbing knot, let them. Then check it.
- Listen to what kids have to say, and believe them. But also look for signs that may indicate otherwise. For example, kids often have a hard time recognizing temperature problems. They may tell you they are fine when they are too cold or overheating. It's our job to make sure they are safe.



# About Youth Continued...

**Kids notice everything.** And they look up to you. When working with youth, it is critical that you act as a role model the entire time. It's also important to remember that we are teaching *other people's kids*, and must do our best to support what's being taught at home. Since everyone's family culture is a little bit different, youth leaders have a responsibility to maintain a conservative atmosphere that supports appropriate behavior. Here are some guidelines that Youth Leaders are expected to share with other volunteers at the start:

- Use clean language. Avoid swearing (including the borderline words that some families are okay with and others aren't), and avoid discussing "adult topics".
- Keep conversations inclusive. Consider that our youth come from many different backgrounds and family styles. Avoid heavily opinionated discussions, and discussions that may be perceived as judgmental by youth or adults in the group.
- Avoid sarcasm. Sarcasm can be misinterpreted and can compromise an emotionally safe environment.
- Wear the clothes & gear you're asking the kids to wear.
- Put cell phones away and leave them away.
- Avoid discussing the program, the participants or reading any evaluations until all participants are gone.



# Mandatory Reporting

Many states, including Washington, have laws requiring youth workers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. Mandatory Reporting laws exist to protect the welfare of children, and CPS staff are trained to handle reports in ways that are respectful and protective of everyone involved, including the reporter.

What is a Mandatory Reporter? A Mandatory Reporter is a person whose role requires them to report suspected child abuse. For example, if a pediatrician notices patterns of bruising on a child and does not report it, s/he is inherently enabling child abuse by looking the other way. As someone whose profession is to promote child health and well-being, s/he is negligent by not reporting suspected abuse.

Mountaineers Youth Volunteer Leaders are mandatory reporters under Washington State Law when they are supervising other volunteers who they suspect are being abusive or neglectful of children in the program. Mountaineers Youth Volunteer Leaders are NOT mandatory reporters if they have reason to believe a child is being abused by someone other than a Mountaineers volunteer OR if they are not serving in a supervisory role. However, it is important that all Youth Volunteers review and understand how a child abuse report works. Although not required by law, any Mountaineers Volunteer *can* report suspected abuse and will receive the same protections that a Mandatory Reporter would receive.

Please take some time to review the written material and slideshow about Washington State Mandatory Reporting.

Washington State Mandated Reporter Training: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/MandatedReporterTraining.pdf>

# Safe Supervision

Safe and consistent supervision is essential in running safe programs with youth. Here are just a few reasons why:

Youth need help making safe choices. Preschoolers and teenagers alike have been known to go too close to cliff edges, say things that are hurtful to others, and test boundaries to see what they can get away with.

Youth are growing, some have limited body awareness, and are therefore accident-prone. We need to help keep them safe.

In our programs, we teach safety in high-risk activities, empowering youth to be safe and competent outdoor recreationists and conservationists. We can monitor and manage the level of risk when we are present. We can't when we're out of sight.

We believe that our members, staff and volunteers are caring, responsible and trustworthy individuals. But we can't let that trust endanger our youth. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when we have data that informs us of cycles of abuse and patterns of sexual predators, we must design procedures to protect our youth. These same procedures exist to protect our members, staff and volunteers from destructive false accusations.

There are a million worst-case scenarios, which probably won't happen. But we can't afford to run our programs on luck. We have children, whom their parents have trusted in our care, that we are responsible for. Our minimum expectation is to return every youth to their parents at the end of the program. Our goal is to return them better – healthier, more competent, more confident, more responsible, and more compassionate. We cannot allow foolish risks that happen out of our sight to harm youth in our programs.

## **A note about the use of photos**

We encourage you to take photos on your programs, and share those photos with the program participants and Mountaineers Staff. Many of our programs have facebook groups, which are private groups where participants interact and share photos. A Flickr or Shutterfly album are also great ways to share photos.

Because some families prefer not to have photos of their children publicly available, and because some of the youth in our programs come from unstable home situations, we need to be sensitive about not posting photos in public forums. It's important that photos **ONLY** be shared with the group participants and Mountaineers Staff. Mountaineers Staff will only use photos of youth whose parents have granted permission to use their photos.



# Safe Supervision continued...

So what is safe supervision?

Children and Youth under the age of 18 are NEVER left unsupervised. Ever.

Children under age 14 must be in the sight/sound of a trained adult at all times, including during bathroom breaks (see [Monitoring Bathrooms](#)).

Youth ages 14-18 must be appropriately supervised at all times. This means that adults know EXACTLY where each youth is and how long they should be there at all times.

When a group is split up, leaders must know which children are in which group. Never assume a youth who is not with you is with another adult. If a child who was in your group is no longer in your group, it is imperative that you verify that s/he has moved to another adult's group.

Every effort should be made to provide at least two adults to supervise youth.

When there is only one adult, it is impossible to provide constant supervision unless all youth are in the same place at all times.

When emergencies, or even difficult situations arise, it is necessary to have one adult deal with the situation while another adult works with the rest of the group.

In situations where adults must split up (eg. Driving youth, running rotational activities), a communication plan should be decided upon in advance so the supervising adults can provide support for each other if needed. Check-in times and walkie talkies work well for this.

One adult should NEVER be alone with one youth.

This practice prevents uncomfortable or dangerous situations and protects adults from false accusations.

Predators are skilled at creating alone-time with youth. This practice prevents that from ever happening.

Youth can misinterpret the intentions of an adult's words or actions. This makes youth feel uncomfortable and/or prompts them to report benign behavior as inappropriate. The presence of another person reduces the vulnerability of the situation, and provides witnesses should an accusation be made.

Exceptions: some programmatic situations inherently create a 1:1 situation (eg. Multipitch Climbs). In these cases, steps should be taken in advance to minimize risk to the youth and adult leader.

Ratios

Minimum required adult:youth ratios (parents and youth agency chaperones can be included in ratio *as long as* they understand and accept their leadership role):

Ages 0-3 – 1:3

Ages 4-6 – 1:8

Ages 7-12 – 1:10

Ages 13+ - 1:12

Suggested adult:youth ratios for high-risk activities:

Swimming: 1 Lifeguard:25 Swimmers (all ages) AND 1 non-swimming adult water watcher:10 swimmers

All other high risk activities: not recommended for youth under age 7; maintain at least a 1:6 ratio, depending on level of risk and maturity/ability of the group





# Safe Supervision continued...

## Leadership

Activity leaders must ensure that there is at least one Qualified Youth Leader present during the activity, that all Frequent Adult Helpers are Qualified Youth Leaders and that one person is the *designated* QYL each day.

Designated Qualified Youth Leaders are responsible for ensuring that adult volunteers and staff have a clear understanding of their role in the program, and any special considerations they must make to provide a safe environment for the youth participant(s). Qualified Youth Leaders must take responsibility for creating programmatic structures that ensure that the safety of the youth and of the adult volunteers is not compromised.

Whenever possible, activity leaders should act as “floaters”. This means activity leaders are not counted in ratio.

It is helpful if activity leaders are not teaching, but roaming and providing support for other volunteer instructors.

## Situations requiring extra vigilance:

Transportation – whether in carpools or in a bus, groups of youth become split up or mixed together, which makes it easy to assume but difficult to know that all youth are accounted for. Best practice is to have a list and take attendance.

Program transitions – when groups of youth are rotating from one activity to the next, kids can get mixed up in groups or lost. It is a good idea to have a system in place for knowing which kids belong where at what time, and check that they are there.

High risk activities – the risk of minor injuries (slips, falls, pinched fingers, etc) exists all the time with youth, even indoors. But when we take youth into situations where the potential for serious injury or death exists (exposed trails, crags, steep snow slopes) we must be extra vigilant with supervision. This may include providing a higher adult:youth ratio, sequencing activities so that youth take turns in high risk territory, or providing extra safety equipment or site rules that exceed what we’d provide for adults. Remember – we must be more intentional about creating a safe environment for youth than we are with adults because youth are not able to take full responsibility for their own safety.

Water activities – all water activities, including swimming at public waterfronts, stream exploration, river and lake activities, boating and beach exploration, should be considered high-risk activities. Like unexpected rock-fall at a crag or someone accidentally backing off the edge of a cliff, drownings happen quickly and without warning. Unlike a rock-fall incident where you see the injured person you need to attend to, in a drowning you can only see a space where that person once was. Unlike a fall from a ledge which is often accompanied by a scream, drownings are usually silent. See [Water Activities](#)





# Youth Programs

Youth Programs in The Mountaineers refers to programs in which youth participants are dropped off and in the direct care of Mountaineers volunteers. This includes programs where some parent chaperones may be present, but other youth are dropped off and left in our care. Examples include: summer camps, Mountaineers Adventure Club teen programs and Explorers pre-teen programs. It also includes partner programs with youth agencies IF the youth agency is not providing staff.



## Special Considerations:

Mountaineers staff and volunteers are directly responsible for the physical and emotional safety of youth participants. When participants are dropped off, Mountaineers staff and volunteers accept temporary guardianship over the youth until they are signed out by a permanent guardian or another person authorized by that permanent guardian to sign them out.

Parents do not always disclose important information about their children.

Mountaineers staff and volunteers are solely responsible for setting a tone of physical and emotional safety and structure, and maintaining a culture of respect. Parent support and/or support from outside agencies is not available in this context.

Large group management, small group management and individual participant support are the responsibility of Mountaineers staff and volunteers. Maintaining a controlled group environment is paramount to the physical and emotional safety of individual youth participants.

## Unique Procedures:

### Sign-in/Sign-out

For programs with youth under the age of 14, a dated sign-in and sign-out sheet should be maintained for each day. It should include time in, time out, and parent sign-out signature. Parent signature at sign-in is optional, but must be consistent within the program.

In certain instances where a sign-in/sign-out sheet is impractical, (eg. Explorers), specific procedures should be written and parents should sign stating that they have read and agree to the procedures.

For programs with youth 14-17, drop-off and pick-up procedures should be written and parents should sign stating that they have read and agree to the procedures.

Any youth that leaves without following standard procedures should receive a parent phone call immediately to ensure the youth left with an appropriate person.





# Youth Programs continued...

## Health History & Medications

All participants must have on file a medical history current within two years.

Program leaders must have a “permission to treat” form for each participant, signed by the participant’s parent/guardian, with them or accessible on site.

Youth prescription medications must be discussed with the program leaders and accompanied with Doctor’s orders. It is imperative that program leaders know what medications are present, what the appropriate dosage is, and the effects of not taking the medication, the effects of overdose and the potential side effects of the medication. If the participant self-administers the medication, we must have written permission from the parent.

Controlled medications (federally listed controlled substances which includes any potentially addictive substance such as codeine, oxycodone, Adderol, Ritalin, Xanax, Ativan and others) and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with Mountaineers adult staff or volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by Mountaineers staff or volunteers. Time and dosage must be logged.

Hypodermic needles that are required for medical administration and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with Mountaineers adult staff or volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by Mountaineers staff or volunteers. Exception: EpiPen auto-injectors may be carried with the youth to whom it is prescribed.

Diabetes monitoring plans must be discussed in detail and presented in writing to Mountaineers staff and volunteers, signed by the participant’s parents, even if the youth self-monitors. Plan must include daily routine, possible complications, signs and symptoms and appropriate response.

## Special Circumstances

Many youth have life situations that may impact their participation in Mountaineers programming. These situations may be medical, physical, dietary, religious, emotional, family-related, school-related or trauma-related. In order to best serve each youth, we request that parents/guardians share this information with us on a “Special Circumstances” form.

Special Circumstances forms should not be shared with anyone other than the program leader(s) without specific consent from the parent/guardian.



We will make every effort to accommodate any needs associated with a youth participant’s special circumstances. If a program is such that special accommodations are not practical, Mountaineers Staff and/or Volunteer Leaders must communicate this to the family in advance of the program, so that they can decide whether or not to participate.



# Youth Programs continued...

## Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure

In each program, Youth Leaders must exercise careful judgment about the disclosure of health and special circumstance information.

Youth health and special circumstance information should not be shared with anyone—other leaders, other participants, youth or adults, without prior consent from the family.

In many cases, disclosure is not necessary for the safety of the program.

In the event that disclosure is necessary for safety reasons, youth and parents must be notified in advance, and caution must be exercised to ensure that only those *needing* the information are given the information.



## Ratios

A minimum of two adults (age 18+) should be providing active leadership at every youth program, and at least one adult (age 21+) must be present.

For programs with youth under the age of 7, a 1:8 adult:youth ratio must be maintained for that age group. In some situations, a teen helper (age 14+) can be included in the ratio, as long as that teen is never alone with the youth without an adult present.

For programs with youth ages 7-12, a 1:10 adult:youth ratio must be maintained. In some situations, a teen helper (age 14+) can be included in the ratio, as long as that teen is never alone with the youth without an adult present.

For programs with youth ages 13-17, a 1:12 adult:youth ratio must be maintained.

## Head Counts

Mountaineers staff and volunteers must know where all youth participants are at all times. Head counts should be taken on a regular basis.

If the location of a participant is unknown, all activity must stop and finding that participant becomes first priority.

If a participant's location is unknown during a water-based activity (swimming, kayaking, sailing), it becomes an emergency.

## Tips for Success:

Provide name tags for all youth and adults.

Keep youth in small groups of 8-12 whenever possible.

Take the time to make group contracts early on so the youth have ownership over the rules they've set.

Position youth in a circle or seated before talking to them – structured space facilitates better lis-



# Family Programs

Family Programs in The Mountaineers refers to programs designed specifically for family participation. In these programs, parents must be present and assume responsibility for their children's behavior and well-being. Examples include family hikes, family climbing days and family weekends at lodges.

## Special Considerations:

Each family comes with their own family culture, which may be very similar to or very different from other families' cultures.

Parents influence their children's expectations, which can confuse program objectives. It is important to clearly state program objectives before registration, after registration, and again at the start of the program.

Parents enjoy these opportunities to socialize with other parents. While this is an important aspect of our family programming, it can detract from parent supervision if expectations are not set and maintained.

## Unique Procedures:

Parents are responsible for behavior management of their children and any other children accompanying them.

Children who attend family programs as guests of other children whose parents are present must present the program leader with written permission listing the participating parent as the guest youth's chaperone.

Parents are responsible for monitoring bathrooms, basic first aid, and other individual needs of their children and guests.

Program leaders who participate with their own children must have another adult designated as an alternative chaperone for their children, so that the leader can focus on group leadership without the distraction of supervising his/her own children.

## Tips for success:

State rules & expectations to the entire group at the beginning of the program. Sometimes it helps to speak to the kids, but make sure parents hear. This can help encourage parents to follow the same rules/expectations.

Be sure to read the Mountaineers Family Activities Leaders Guide.



# Youth in Adult Programs

Youth in Adult Programs in The Mountaineers refers to programs that are designed primarily for adults, but in which youth occasionally enroll. Examples include youth between the ages of 14-17 enrolling in the Basic Alpine Climbing Course, going on a day hike, or participating in a stewardship project.

When program leaders make the decision to welcome youth into existing adult-oriented programs, the decision may inherently change the nature of the program, or of part of the program. Any program or part of a program that includes youth needs to be an appropriate environment for youth, which means keeping language and conversation “PG13” as much as possible, refraining from alcohol consumption or drinking conservatively, and steering adult students and instructors away from sarcastic or offensive comments.



## Special Considerations:

Adult participants do not necessarily have experience with youth, and may be entirely inappropriate around youth participants.

Teenagers who are generally mature and responsible can fool adults into thinking they, too, are an adult. Teenagers, however, are not prepared emotionally or cognitively to handle certain information appropriately. They are also inconsistently able to make smart decisions.

Youth might not speak up when they feel uncomfortable.

Teenagers who attend high school are trained culturally to follow directions and listen to instructors. They are less likely to question the decisions of adults – either instructors or fellow students. This creates a need to err on the side of caution even more than we might with an all-adult class. It also implicates the need to check in with teenagers often to make sure they are comfortable and okay.

## Unique Procedures:

Youth in adult programs must have a signed acknowledgement of risk form specific to youth participation in an adult program by the parent. This form can be found on The Mountaineers’ website at [www.mountaineers.org/youth/youth-forms/YPIAP](http://www.mountaineers.org/youth/youth-forms/YPIAP).



Youth in adult programs should never be left unsupervised. Two adults, including a Qualified Youth Leader should be with the youth at all times. Exceptions include sleeping, changing and using the bathroom. Youth can do these things alone, as long as the Qualified Youth Leader knows exactly where the participant is and what time they left (if using the bathroom).

Youth should never be alone with one adult out of sight of anyone else. This includes sleeping, changing and using the bathroom. Activity-specific strategies for compliance are listed in each activity section.

Youth Leaders must monitor behavior of other adult participants and leaders and address inappropriate behavior immediately.



# Youth in Adult Programs Continued...

## Health History & Medications

All participants must have on file a medical history current within two years.

Program leaders must have a “permission to treat” form for each participant, signed by the participant’s parent/guardian, with them or accessible on site.

Youth prescription medications must be discussed with the program leaders and accompanied with Doctor’s orders. It is imperative that program leaders know what medications are present, what the appropriate dosage is, and the effects of not taking the medication, the effects of overdose and the potential side effects of the medication. If the participant self-administers the medication, we must have written permission from the parent.

Controlled medications (federally listed controlled substances which includes any potentially addictive substance such as codeine, oxycodone, Adderol, Ritalin, Xanax, Ativan and others) and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with Mountaineers adult staff or volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by Mountaineers staff or volunteers. Time and dosage must be logged.

Hypodermic needles that are required for medical administration and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with Mountaineers adult staff or volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by Mountaineers staff or volunteers. Exception: EpiPen auto-injectors may be carried with the youth to whom it is prescribed.



Diabetes monitoring plans must be discussed in detail and presented in writing to Mountaineers staff and volunteers, signed by the participant’s parents, even if the youth self-monitors. Plan must include daily routine, possible complications, signs and symptoms and appropriate response.

## Special Circumstances

Many youth have life situations that may impact their participation in Mountaineers programming.

These situations may be medical, physical, dietary, religious, emotional, family-related, school-related or trauma-related. In order to best serve each youth, we request that parents/guardians share this information with us on a “Special Circumstances” form.

Special Circumstances forms should not be shared with anyone other than the program leader(s) without specific consent from the parent/guardian.

We will make every effort to accommodate any needs associated with a youth participant’s special circumstances. If a program is such that special accommodations are not practical, Mountaineers Staff and/or Volunteer Leaders must communicate this to the family in advance of the program, so that they can decide whether or not to participate.

## Tips for success

Pre-select small groups to include adults who either work with children or have children with the youth participants.

Identify mentors among instructor pool and participant pool who are willing to take a background check, and position them with the youth during the course and/or outing.



# Young Adults in Youth Programs

Young Adults in Youth Programs in The Mountaineers refers to programs that are designed primarily for youth, but in which 18-19 year old youth who are legally adults enroll. An example includes youth between the ages of 18-19 enrolling in Mountaineers Adventure Club who are currently still in high school, or participants in a youth program who turn 18 during the program.

## Special Considerations:

While the law tells us that individuals 18+ are adults, these youth are still technically teenagers, and may not view themselves as adults in the program.

Young Adults in our programs might not realize that their role in the program has changed. It's important that we lay clear expectations for any participants who are over the age of 18, and maintain these expectations for all of our Adult participants, volunteers, and staff.

## Unique Procedures:

Young Adults should never be alone with one youth out of sight of anyone else. This includes sleeping, changing and using the bathroom. Activity-specific strategies for compliance are listed in each activity section. This practice prevents uncomfortable or dangerous situations and protects adults from false accusations.



Programs that have procedures and structures in place to maintain a safe atmosphere for youth will make it easy for young adult participants to protect themselves as well.

In the interest of maintaining an inclusive environment, it is important that we clearly inform our Young Adults about their new responsibilities as adults, that they understand how to protect themselves, AND that our programs are set up in a way that allows them to participate fully without having to set up special accommodations.

Young Adults are encouraged to share sleeping accommodations with other young adults or older teenagers.

Parents of all participants should be notified when a program may include older teenagers who are legal adults. This is best done in a supplementary waiver or through a program handbook.





# Youth Partnership Programs

Youth Partnership Programs in The Mountaineers refers to programs The Mountaineers does in partnership with other youth-serving agencies. Examples include the YMCA bringing youth to our climbing wall, the Boy Scouts bringing a group to Baker Lodge, and a school group meeting us for a snowshoe outing. These programs use instructors from The Mountaineers and chaperones from the partnering agency.



## Special Considerations:

Typically these groups come only a few times in a year, and our volunteers don't have time to learn participant names, which makes behavior management more challenging.

Each group comes with their own agency culture, which may or may not match ours.

## Unique procedures:

Agency chaperones are responsible for behavior management.

Agency chaperones monitor bathrooms, basic first aid, and other individual participant needs.

Agency chaperones are responsible for sign-in, sign-out and monitoring each participant.

## Tips for success:

Ensure waivers are sent out to the group leader ahead of time, because youth are not dropped off by their parents at The Mountaineers. Youth who do not have a waiver will be asked to sit out, not participate in the program, and an agency chaperone will be responsible for supervising that youth.

Have name tags available for all youth, chaperones, and Mountaineers volunteers.

Be sure agency chaperones understand their responsibilities.

Volunteers should ask participants their names (in the absence of name tags) before speaking to them, so that we are calling youth by their names.

Check in with chaperones to learn whether they have a specific way to get the kids quiet, or any specific agency rules they'd like you to enforce.





# Special Events

Special Events at The Mountaineers refers to single-day events that are open to the public and designed for youth and families. Examples include Winter Trails Day, OutdoorsFEST, and Earth Day festivals.

## Special Considerations:

Volunteers will not know youth participants' names, and may not even know who the parent is of each youth.

Public events can be crowded and chaotic, and it's important to clearly identify Mountaineers volunteers and/or other official adults.

Participants do not necessarily know the rules of the facility, even though we may think they are common sense.

## Unique Procedures:

Mountaineers Volunteers should wear name tags at the least; better if they are wearing an identifying tshirt or vest.

All Mountaineers Volunteers must be in public view whenever working with youth. If a youth needs help, volunteers should help in a public place OR take at least one other volunteer with them to help the youth.



## Tips for Success:

Post all rules very clearly for parents and youth to see. Even the obvious ones.

Volunteers should have very specific, unchanging roles for an entire shift. This helps ensure coordinators know where everyone is.



# Stranger Danger

Most Mountaineers programs happen on public land, which means we are often sharing the land with other recreationists. These other recreationists are often people we don't know. They have not been background checked, and we have no knowledge of their outdoor skills or whether they are able to act safely and responsibly in the presence of other groups. In many cases, the presence of others is a non-issue. However, plenty of us have stories of difficult or dangerous situations that arose due to another party's behavior. Here are some ways to deal with this:

First and foremost, it is important that we are prepared to be safe, responsible and respectful outdoor citizens. This means:

- Ensure all participants (including youth and adults) agree upon and understand the plan for safe travel.

- If horseplay is a part of your program (eg. Water fights while rafting) be sure it is done in a designated time and space so that it does not create a prolonged atmosphere of chaos, and so that it does not disturb other visitors.

- Role model, teach and expect that all participants treat other visitors with respect by stepping to the side of the trail to let them pass, keeping voices at a reasonable volume, and respecting quiet hours at public campgrounds.

- When sharing recreation facilities such as crags or small public picnic areas, Mountaineers Leaders should approach other parties (groups or individuals) to find out what their plan is and establish how they can both share the facilities. Mountaineers leaders should make specific efforts not to monopolize an area.

In public places, establish your group's area and stay together as much as possible. Most unwelcome encounters can be avoided by the way you physically position your group.

If someone not connected to your group begins talking with a youth, leaders must call that youth over to the group. This removes the youth from the situation. If removing the youth doesn't work and the stranger is persistent, one adult must remove the group and engage them in an activity while another adult talks with the stranger.



# Monitoring Bathrooms

*Modified from The Redwoods Group Risk Management Services, 2006*

Bathrooms are a place of privacy...so most of us have been taught from childhood. That privacy is good...it allows users a degree of modesty and it allows others separation from activities in which they don't wish to participate. However, it can also provide seclusion...a site for inadequate supervision. Inappropriate behavior in bathrooms is increasing significantly. Without proper supervision the bathroom environment allows children the opportunity to explore their curiosity, which can lead to inappropriate behavior. Unmonitored and accessible bathrooms can also provide predators with secluded access to children.

Whether the abuser is an adult or child, the necessary factors for inappropriate behavior normally are contact, seclusion, and influence. Most of the incidents [youth serving agencies] see involve a lack of supervision...a lack that allows seclusion for peer to peer abuse to occur or for a perpetrator to abuse.

Bathrooms and restrooms are the most frequent sites of sexual abuse of participants in youth programs, apart from sleeping and napping areas in childcare and camp settings. We must control these spaces and the activity in them if we are to provide a safe environment for the young people we serve.

## During Youth Drop-off Programs (especially Summer Camp)

One adult staff or volunteer must directly supervise children in bathrooms with multiple stalls from the bathroom doorway. By standing in the doorway with the door open, general oversight will be maintained without infringing on the personal privacy provided by the individual stall, and the supervising adult is in public view.

There must never be more youth in the bathroom than available stalls (even in the case of bathrooms with urinals). This helps to prevent horseplay as well as inappropriate behavior.

In the case of single-stall bathrooms, staff & volunteers must monitor bathroom use from the hallway, regulating that one person is going into the bathroom at a time.

Any assistance needed by youth while in the bathroom (or dressing) must be attended to by two adults OR the youth's parent or guardian

During Youth Partnership Programs, this monitoring is done by staff from the visiting agency.

During Family Programs, the above procedures apply unless youth are in the bathroom with their own parent/guardian AND no other youth are in the bathroom at the same time.



# Monitoring Bathrooms continued...

During Adult Programs with youth *and* programs for teens ages 14+, youth may be sent to the bathroom without direct supervision as long as:

- staff, not the youth, chose the group going to the bathroom; relationships and interaction between the children should be carefully considered – don't set the stage for bullying or other peer-on-peer abuse.

- strive for the rule of three...i.e., each group has at least three youth (never just two as has historically been done because such a practice creates the potential for peer-on-peer abuse). In Adult programs, youth participants should NEVER go with only one adult. Group bathroom breaks are best; otherwise a closely-monitored solo-trip to use the bathroom is acceptable.

- the number of people sent never exceeds the number of bathroom stalls. Exception: In the case of Forest Service lands, which often have two pit-toilets, larger groups are often better.

Time away from the programming area must be closely monitored; for example,

- Staff and volunteers know the necessary travel time and enforce immediate returning to the program area.

- Youth are required to get specific permission to leave the program area.

- Youth are required to report to the staff member who authorized the bathroom trip immediately on their return.

- Youth are not allowed to dawdle in the bathroom or to wander between the bathroom and the program site.

If necessary to ensure the children's safety, a staff member should send the youth into an otherwise empty bathroom one at a time while supervising the rest of the children outside the door.

Carefully monitor behavior during group use times in the restrooms, e.g., changing for swimming or any other similar activity.

**Remember, the goal of bathroom monitoring procedures is to minimize or eliminate opportunities for youth to be in a secluded environment with another individual. Mountaineers programs happen in diverse environments, and judgment will need to be exercised in many cases. Bathroom Monitoring procedures will need to be modified for the environment, but *must not* be modified or influenced by the extent to which the leader trusts the participants.**



# Overnight Programs

Overnight Programs are opportunities to provide deeper meaningful wilderness experiences for youth. They can provide greater learning opportunities, friendships through common experiences, and memories that last forever. However, overnight programs also require an additional layer of risk management. Supervision is trickier when everyone is asleep, and personal activities surrounding bedtime, such as changing and personal hygiene, need to be supervised safely and respectfully.

During an overnight program:

Youth should not share sleeping quarters with adults unless:

The adults are the legal parents/guardians or siblings of that youth.

The sleeping quarters have individual beds, such as in a cabin or yurt.



Sleeping quarters (especially a tent situation) should be designed and programmed for appropriate supervision. Youth should generally be in tent groups of 3 or more, which creates group accountability and “crowd supervision”. In some cases, it may be appropriate for youth to sleep in solo tents. Tent groups of two should be avoided or treated as a last resort option because it creates an environment that enables bullying, abuse or otherwise inappropriate behavior. Adult tents (and other sleeping quarters) should be positioned in a way that adults can be accessed by youth in the middle of the night, and so that they can provide adequate supervision.

Specific nighttime bathroom procedures must be communicated before dark on the first night. Suggestions include:

Ensuring everyone knows how to get to the bathroom and knows not to leave their sleeping quarters without a light source and/or whistle.

Leaving a personal backpack in a designated area to identify that the bathroom is in use and by whom.

Identifying areas of hazardous terrain to be avoided at night (eg. Stream crossings).

Encouraging youth to wake an adult (and which adult to wake) should they need anything.

Ensuring all youth have working light sources and whistles should they get lost on their way back from the bathroom.





# Transportation of Youth



Transportation to and from the Mountaineers Program Centers and other designated program meeting places is at the sole discretion of the parent/guardian of each youth participant. If a youth takes public transportation, carpools with another participant or otherwise transports himself/herself to and from the meeting location, the parent is responsible for making appropriate communication arrangements with the youth.

In some instances, The Mountaineers arranges or provides transportation *as part of* a youth program (NOT to and from a youth program). Examples include Summer Camp, Mountaineers Adventure Club, and Explorers. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in youth 14 and under in the US, and it is very important that we take our transportation policies seriously, and remain vigilant about transportation safety. When transportation is provided or arranged *as part of* a youth program:

All adults driving youth in personal vehicles for Mountaineers programs must be at least 21 years old, be a Qualified Youth Leader, submit a driving history carry a valid US Drivers License, and carry a minimum of \$300,000 in auto insurance.

When transporting youth, all laws must be followed without exception. This includes speed limits, seatbelt laws and not using cell phones unless pulled over in a safe location.

Vehicles transporting youth must have current registration.

12-passenger and 15-passenger vans are not approved means of transportation.

Vehicles transporting youth must have one working seatbelt per passenger.

When driving more than 2 hours, one of the following conditions must be met:

Driver must not have participated in more than 6 hours of activity prior to driving.

At least two drivers over the age of 21 must be in the car, and switch driving at minimum every 90 minutes.

If neither of the above conditions can be met, driver **MUST** stop driving to rest for a minimum of 20 minutes at least every 90 minutes.



Hired Transportation (such as a bus or shuttle): Company must provide proof of General Liability as well as Automobile Liability coverage in an amount of no less than \$2,000,000 .



# Water Programs

“Water Activities” refers to any activities that happen in, on or near water. Included are:

- Swimming in pools, lakes, rivers and the ocean
- “Quick dips” along a hike
- Beach combing and skipping rocks
- Tide-pool exploration
- Rafting
- Kayaking
- Sailing

What makes water activities high-risk?

Water is cold.

Water can be unpredictable.

It is difficult or impossible to see underwater hazards, including:

Rocks that can trap feet, clothing or other body parts.

Weeds, rope or trash that can cause entanglement.

Glass, barnacles or other sharp objects that can cause injury.

Drowning is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of accidental death to American youth under age 15, after motor vehicle accidents. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. [cited 2012 May 3]. Available from: URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars>.)

Drownings often happen quickly, silently and without warning. Please [watch this video](#) to understand how quickly a drowning can happen.

Most children who drown in home swimming pools are away from their parents’ supervision for less than 5 minutes. Please read the Red Cross fact sheet, [It Only Takes a Moment](#)

Two-thirds of the people who drown never had an intention of being in the water [National Drowning Prevention Alliance 2012]

Please read the Center for Disease Control’s [Unintentional Drowning Fact Sheet](#)







# Water Activities Continued...

Practices that reduce the risk of drowning and water-related injury:

For every 10 swimmers (“swimmers” refers to youth and adults who have demonstrated the ability to swim confidently without stopping for 100 meters) leaders are expected to provide 1 non-swimming Active Adult Watcher, even at public waterfronts with lifeguards. Active Adult Watchers are responsible for watching specific children or specific sections of the water area (including beaches). Designated sections should overlap to ensure all areas are being watched at all times. Active Adult Watchers must not be distracted by anything, including other adults, children, cell phones or dogs. They must be solely focused on watching the swimmers. Because drownings happen in 20-60 seconds and most survivors of near-drownings are rescued within 2 minutes, constant supervision is imperative.

At public lakefronts with designated “shallow sections”, leaders are expected to limit non-swimmers to the shallow section. Leaders must require US Coast Guard approved lifejackets for non-swimmers for whom the “shallow section” could be above waist-height.

When no artificial barriers exist (as in public lakefronts):

Non-swimmers must have 1:1 arms-reach supervision OR wear US Coast Guard approved lifejackets. This includes during wading activities in water that is more than waist-deep on any participant.

Activity leaders must designate swimming boundaries that allow for safe supervision of all swimmers, and strictly enforce them.

Internal Youth Programs and Youth Partnership Programs that include water activities should strive to provide one certified Lifeguard per 25 youth in the water.

Family Activities that include water activities are encouraged to provide a certified Lifeguard. In the absence of a Lifeguard, Activity Leaders are responsible for training adult participants in the hazards of water activities, and a 1:3 ratio of trained adults to youth must be provided. Boundaries must be designated such that youth cannot enter an area of water that is more than 10 feet from a standing adult. “Standing Adult” can include standing in water that is up to waist deep on the Active Adult Watcher. It can also include an adult who is seated in a boat in deeper water.

Adult Programs with youth are encouraged to provide a certified Lifeguard. In the absence of a Lifeguard, Activity Leaders are responsible for training adult participants in the hazards of water activities, and one trained adult must be designated as the Active Adult Watcher for each youth participant.





# On the Trail

When hiking or traveling on a trail, it can be difficult to supervise a group of youth who travel at different paces. Some tips for success:

Be sure to review/teach trail etiquette and safety before heading out on trail. This includes Leave No Trace principles, scheduled water breaks, and specific hazards of the trail.

Trail games, such as Camouflage and Flash Flood can help to keep a group together.

Designate a “lead” and a “sweep”. These can be youth or adults. Let youth know that they must stay behind the “lead” at all times, and if they get in front of the “lead”, they will be asked to go back and walk with the “sweep”.

Maintain a strict “no running” rule, and enforce it with incentives for using “walking feet” and consequences for running. This is especially important on steep downhills.



# At the Crag



Crags pose some unique safety hazards that leaders must acknowledge and address:

Potential for natural rock fall.

Potential for human-initiated rock fall.

Narrow crag bases.

Every adult who is belaying a participant is one less adult to problem-solve when a difficult situation arises.

These safety hazards can be minimized through smart programming:

Ensure that there is one helmet per person at the crag *before you arrive* to avoid the need to “share” helmets.

Designate a “helmet zone” and require that all participants and leaders wear helmets in this area at all times.

Teach rock safety *before* arriving at the crag. This includes what to do when someone yells “rock”, etiquette when walking around belayers, where packs will be placed, and any potential hazards of the particular site (snakes, cliffs etc).

Ensure that one adult is a “rover” at all times, not on belay.





# Alpine & Multipitch Climbs

Alpine and Multipitch Climbs add a layer of complexity to supervision with rope teams. Oftentimes communication between youth and adults is difficult, and at other times one youth and one adult are hanging out at a belay station together. It's important to remember the reasons behind our procedures so that we can make the best decisions in a given situation. In this situation, we're trying to provide safe and adequate supervision. We want to always be able to see or hear the youth we are responsible for, and we avoid putting youth and adults in compromising positions that could be unsafe for youth or detrimental to adults. Here's how we can do that in this situation:

Ensure you are bringing youth on climbs that are appropriate for their abilities. When youth have the skills and fitness to participate safely, they will be less reliant on constant adult support. It is very difficult to do most of these types of climbs while providing constant adult support. Don't take youth if they are not ready.

Carry walkie talkies and keep them on at all times. Train all participants in using them effectively, and practice using them before climbing.

Switch up rope teams as many times as possible. Obviously you cannot switch rope teams in the middle of a multipitch climb. However, it is often possible to have different descent teams (whether a walk-off or rappel-off). These teams should be predetermined at the trailhead by the Climb Leader. (eg. At the Blue Lake Trailhead, the leader determines hiking buddies for the approach, rope teams for SEWS, and descent pairs for the rappel. The framework is so that every student has the opportunity to work with different instructors) By switching up rope/hiking teams, the Climb Leader makes it impossible for any adult to single-out any youth. It also helps to protect adults from false accusations.



Alpine climbs do not always lend themselves to privacy for bathroom use. Addressing this at the beginning of the climb so that everyone is aware can help avoid misinterpretations of actions while on the climb. For example, Leaders might tell the group that leaving a rope team while on a glacier is not a safe option, so those who need to use the bathroom will need to be okay with others simply turning their heads. It is also a good idea for the leader to remind participants (especially youth participants) to use the bathroom before roping up to avoid such a situation.

# Age Group Characteristics

Groff, J. Training Trainers to Teach. Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina State University.

## Characteristics of 6-8 year olds:

### Physical:

Are mastering physical skills. Have better control over large muscles than small muscles.

### Social:

Are becoming more aware of peers and their opinions and are beginning to better observe other people.  
Are beginning to experience empathy for others, but still learning about and wrapped up in self.  
Are still family oriented.

### Emotional:

Seek parental approval but are becoming emotionally steadier and freer from parents.  
Tend to behave in ways to avoid punishment.

### Intellectual:

Generalize from own experiences and are more interested in process than product.  
Base their thinking in reality and accuracy.  
Are learning to sort things into categories and arrange in a series.  
Handle only one mental operation at a time.

Environmental education activities for this age group should focus on building knowledge about the natural environment. Lessons that incorporate utilizing the five senses, provide opportunities for collecting and sorting of seeds and allow for the development of cause and effect relationships, such as the relationship of plants to water and sunlight, will provide the learner with stimulating activities that will allow them to achieve success.

## Characteristics of 9-11 year olds:

### Physical:

Are quite active with boundless energy.  
Are maturing at different rates between the sexes. Girls will be maturing faster than boys and some may be entering puberty.  
Are increasing in manual dexterity, small muscle coordination.

### Social:

Generally see adults and authority.  
Feel loyalty to group, club, gang. Enjoy code language and passwords.  
Identify with same sex group. May prefer to be with members of the same sex.  
Prefer working in groups in cooperative activities.  
Expand and use reasoning skills to solve problems, negotiate and compromise with peers.

### Emotional:

View right behavior as "obeying" rules set by those in power.  
Accept parent/family beliefs.  
Admire and imitate older boys and girls  
Are developing decision-making skills.  
Are beginning to question parental authority.  
Need involvement with a caring adult.

### Intellectual:

Have increased attention span, but have many interests which change rapidly.  
Are beginning to think logically and symbolically. Still prefer concrete ideas.  
Are learning to use good judgment.  
Judge ideas in absolutes; right or wrong, fabulous or disgusting, etc. Do not tolerate much middle ground.  
Want to use their skills to explore and investigate the world.

Activities dealing with the value of the natural world can easily be understood by 9 to 11 year olds. Experiences that incorporate physical activity along with opportunities to explore and investigate the world are very appropriate for this age group. Pond studies and insect catch and release programs are favorites, by allowing students to see the importance of all members of the ecosystem. Students begin to understand the role that member of the ecosystem plays, therefore insects, arachnids and reptiles are no longer good or bad in their eyes, but valued for their uniqueness and contributions.

# Age Group Characteristics Cont...

Groff, J. Training Trainers to Teach. Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina State University.

## Characteristics of 12-14 year olds:

### Physical:

- Exhibit a wide range of sexual maturity and growth patterns between genders within gender groups.
- Experience rapid changes in physical appearance.

### Social:

- Are interested in activities involving the opposite sex; learning to live with opposite sex.
- Are looking more to peers than parents. Seek peer recognition.
- Seek acceptance and trust.
- Tend to reject ready-made solutions from adults in favor of their own.
- Question authority and family values.

### Emotional:

- Compare themselves to others.
- Are concerned about physical development and emerging sexuality.
- Are concerned about social graces, grooming and being liked by friends.
- Abandon view of parents as all powerful.
- Strive for independence, yet want and need parents help.
- Need information for making decisions.
- Seek privacy from parents/adults.
- Want to be part of something important.

### Intellectual:

- Find justice and equality to be important issues.
- Think abstractly and hypothetically.
- Are developing skills in the use of logic. Can understand cause and effect.
- Can solve problems that have more than one variable.
- Can imagine consequences.
- Are ready for in-depth, long-term experiences.
- Challenge assumptions.
- Want to explore the world beyond their own community.
- Are curious about the environment.

Youth ages 12 to 14 would thrive in curriculum activities that focus on developing attitudes about the natural world. Looking at community environmental issues and defining their feelings about those issues through research and investigation provides youth to challenge assumptions and redefine their beliefs based on real life experiences.

# Age Group Characteristics Cont...

Groff, J. Training Trainers to Teach. Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina State University.

## Characteristics of 15-18 year olds:

### Physical:

- Are concerned about body image.
- Exhibit smaller range in size and maturity among peers.

### Social:

- Make commitments.
- Can commit to follow through with service.
- See adults as fallible.
- Desire respect.
- Are apt to reject goals set by others.
- Want adult leadership roles.

### Emotional:

- Desire respect.
- Are beginning to accept and enjoy their own uniqueness, but still seek status and approval of peer group.
- Look for confidence of others in their decisions.
- Develop their own set of values and beliefs
- Take on multiple roles.
- Gain autonomy.
- Are introspective.
- Take fewer risks.
- Can initiate and carry out their own tasks without the supervision of others.
- Search for career possibilities.
- Desire a role in determining what happens in their world.

### Intellectual:

- Are mastering abstract thinking. Can imagine impact of present behavior on the future.
- Can consider many perspectives and a given issue.
- Develop theories to explain how things happen.
- Create new possibilities from information.

Fifteen to 18 year olds are ready for authentic experiences in the environment that foster commitment and skill development to protect and improve the environment. Service learning, teaching others and authentic leadership roles around the environment provide 15 to 18 year olds with opportunities to impact their world and challenge others to do the same.



# Some Great Teaching Techniques

Feed their eyes. Use props. Hold things up.

Break skills down into small, achievable steps.

Number the steps: say “There are three things we are going to do next”

Praising kids at the end, when they’ve completed the entire task, is not enough. They need positive feedback from us as they master steps along the way.

The more specific the praise, the better. “Good job, you’re doing great!” is not as effective as “You’re waiting to pull until everybody gets to where you are; that’s really patient; thanks for hanging in there for us” (Describe it, Label it, Praise it)

Use repetition. Say key things in different ways so that they are said more than once.

Say key things in different ways so kids can hear them more than once.

Demonstrating is better than talking. Try to *show* as much as possible.

Show not only what to do but also what *not* to do. Do this with a positive tone. “When you are holding the paper, it won’t look like this, because then it’s facing the wrong way; it will look like this, the way I’m holding it now”

Involve others in your teaching. Get another kid up in front so that they are demonstrating with you. Show the ones up front how to do it in the course of showing everyone and you will find that the attention of the entire group goes up.



# Great Teaching Techniques cont...

As they do steps, have them stop and show you and/or teach each other what they've done so that you can make sure everyone is OK and to celebrate success and build confidence as you go along.

Motivate and personalize the learning process by telling kids how and where *you* learned what you are teaching them.

Try to make what you are teaching special or unique. For example, if true, you can say that most people don't know how to do it, which makes it more motivating for kids to learn.

Help kids deal with imperfection by telling them in advance, if true, that when you learned how to do this, it didn't come out perfectly the first few times. Tell them what you did to learn to do it better.

When a step does not have to be done perfectly, tell them.

During teaching, we are constantly telling people what to do. **Always say please.** Always say thank you. Being respectful builds a better learning relationship.

**ASK QUESTIONS!** The more questions, the better teaching. Say "What do you think is the best way to do this?"





# Emotional Intelligence

In fostering positive social development in children and youth, it is essential to consider all of the various ways of being intelligent and how each of them fosters relationships as well as learning. Emotional intelligence is as much a predictor of success as is IQ and conversely, research has shown that a high IQ with a low emotional intelligence is one predictor for low success rates as an adult.

Emotional Intelligence will provide children/youth with the skills to succeed in the changing work environment—skills that include:

- Being able to work with diverse groups of people
- To teach oneself
- To work in teams
- To communicate successfully
- To problem solve through critical thinking skills

There are five domains within emotional intelligence. These are:

1. **Knowing one's emotions:** self-awareness, including the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens, is critical to psychological insight and understanding.
2. **Managing emotions:** Expressing feelings in appropriate ways is an ability that builds on self-awareness
3. **Motivating oneself:** Channeling emotions to achieve a goal enables outstanding performance of all kinds. "Attitude is everything"
4. **Recognizing emotions in others:** Empathy is the fundamental people skill.
5. **Handling relationships:** The art of relationships can be considered a skill in managing emotions of others. Mastery of the previous four skills is essential for handling relationships: identifying and managing one's own emotions, while recognizing emotions in others and *changing* our actions and reactions in response to others' emotions.

Settings which foster emotional intelligence allow children to be free to express their feelings, provide adult role models for expressing feelings, and are rich with the use of feeling words and discussions about feelings. Knowing and managing one's own emotions is a process that all children (and many adults) are working through as they handle relationships with others.

Learning and growth in the area of emotional intelligence can and does take place in a variety of Mountaineers activities. Although awareness of emotions and focus on those of others starts very early in life, much practice and internal growth and development are needed to truly accomplish these skills.



# Creating safe & effective learning environments

Mountaineers leaders should strive to create physically and emotionally safe environments that facilitate effective learning. While this is true for all Mountaineers programs, it is especially important in youth programs because youth are not fully capable of speaking up for themselves and making sure that their own needs are met.

The hierarchy of human needs shown below, presented by Abraham Maslow in 1943, illustrates needs that must be met in order for humans to be able to learn. The needs listed at the bottom of the triangle, according to Maslow's theory, are needs that **MUST** be met before a person can focus on needs that are higher up on the triangle. For example, it is impossible for a person to focus on making friends in a new place if they do not feel that they are safe. All of their energy goes into their need to feel safe. Likewise, a person cannot learn new skills if they are hungry, thirsty, very cold, very hot or sleep deprived. These are basic needs that will monopolize a person's attention until they are met.

So how does this apply to Mountaineers programs?

When working with youth (and adults), we must identify the learning goals of the activity and create an environment that makes those goals achievable. For example, if the program goal is to teach knots, we can ensure physiological needs are met by creating a comfortable environment, providing snacks (or reminding kids to bring snacks) and scheduling bathroom breaks. We can ensure safety needs are met by providing name tags, presenting ourselves with a friendly demeanor and creating a positive atmosphere by reminding kids to be supportive and helpful of one another. We can create a sense of belonging by positioning the group in a circle so that everyone feels included and no one feels left out.

Take hiking as another example. It's a good idea to double check that everyone has enough food, water and clothing before the hike. If one of your learning goals is that kids learn to come prepared, you may choose not to double check, because there is value in learning experientially. However, be sure to think of what situations may arise and what the consequences may be. If a youth participant fails to bring enough water, there is valuable learning in that moment of realization. However, a positive learning experience can turn into a negative, uncomfortable, scary or even dangerous experience if the leader isn't prepared to control the learning. Leaders should be prepared in this situation to ensure that participants' basic needs are met. If the leader brings extra water that s/he does not tell the kids about, s/he can offer that water to the youth who has had enough time to realize the repercussions of not bringing enough water. In this way, the leader facilitates the best possible learning environment.





# Tools for Behavior Management

## Level One:

**Give Choices** – when a child is not doing what’s asked or resisting something you need him/her to do, give choices. Example: “you need to clean up the goldfish you spilled or find someone to help you”; “you can either carry your water bottle in your hand, or put it in your backpack and take it out during water breaks”

**This for that** – when a child or group is not doing what’s asked or resisting something you need to have done, you can offer this for that. Example: “If you move all of your packs to the side of the trail before I count to 5, we’ll have brownies as our snack”; “if you keep paddling, we’ll be done in time to stop for ice cream on the way home”

**Smoothing** – when kids are uncooperative, stalling, and there isn’t much time for a more involved response, try smoothing the situation over to get through it. Example: “I know we’re all tired, but let’s get through this last five minutes and then we can rest”; “I know this part’s boring, but if you pay attention for 10 more minutes, you’ll know how to use the compass for the scavenger hunt”

**State your expectations** – When kids are resisting rules or threatening not to comply, state your expectations clearly. Example: “I asked you to sit at the picnic table while eating. I don’t want to find food all over the ground.”; “We agreed that we would be respectful of the person speaking. If you are standing next to someone who might distract you, please be responsible and move.”

**Friendly challenge** – When kids won’t cooperate, a friendly challenge with an adult can inspire them! Example: “How fast do you think we can get all the harnesses put away? 2 minutes? Okay go!”; “Let’s see who can find the most garbage at our campsite in 5 minutes”



# Tools for Behavior Management Cont...

## Level Two:

**Take child aside to listen/talk** – When kids are having trouble cooperating despite your efforts, find out why. Try not to make assumptions, but pull the child aside and ask what’s going on. Perhaps a child feels nervous or self-conscious in a certain activity or setting, or perhaps the child is upset about something. Sometimes children misinterpret adult actions or words and their feelings are hurt. We don’t learn these things unless we ask what’s going on.

**Consequences for non-compliance** – When kids are testing their limits, be sure there are consequences that are stated ahead of time and related to the actions. Example: “No, we can’t play camouflage because it took us too long to pack up our lunches and clean up the area.”; “We won’t be able to get on the boulder for the rest of the week because you weren’t following the safety rules we told you about.”

**Chat with the group** – when kids are having a hard time getting along, it can be a good idea to chat with the group and come with a resolution. If you have been working closely with the group, it can be helpful to have a guest adult come to facilitate the chat. It can be a good idea to have the group draft a behavior contract that they can all agree to.

**Special Activity** – if a group is struggling and spirits are low, a special activity can help unify them and get them excited to be exploring together again. Be sure to debrief the activity and help them identify how they can continue to have fun together.

**Ask a friend how to get through to a child** – When you are not getting through to a specific child, asking that child’s parent, friend or sibling can help. For example “It seems like Sam’s not having very much fun this week. You’re his friend, what are some things he really likes that you think might help him have a better time?”

**Time Out** – When kids are misbehaving, too silly, fighting or not playing by the rules, a time out can help a child refocus or calm down. Example: “Sarah remember we talked about playing rough? Why don’t you take a 5 minute time-out, and then come back and join us playing by the rules”; “Mark, everyone’s trying to listen but it’s hard when you keep doing that. Please take a 5 minute time out, then come back and join us”

**Secret signal** – Many kids who struggle with behavior *want* to behave but are easily distracted or overstimulated. These kids often appreciate a secret signal which helps them with their own self-awareness. Example: “Finn, when you’re starting to play too rough, I’ll touch my nose so you know to back off a little.” Kids appreciate this because it helps them stay out of trouble.



# Tools for behavior management cont...

## Level Three:

**Parent Discussion** – when a child is defying your or other leaders on a continual basis, parents should be aware that it is a problem. Parents can offer some advice or insight into the situation, which can often give you some tricks and tools you need to resolve the situation. Even if that’s not the case, parents need to be aware of an escalating situation so that if a child needs to be removed from a program, parents are not surprised by this and are aware of the efforts that have been made.

**Contract with Child** - A written contract that children sign helps them identify and acknowledge the behavior that is unacceptable, agree on a plan to change the behavior, and clearly understand the consequences if the behavior does not change.

## Level Four:

**Child is dismissed** – Some kids are not able to be successful in certain situations during a particular time in their development. When the need to dismiss a child from a program is identified, the Education Director and/or Executive Director should be notified *before* the child is dismissed. Staff need to understand the story behind the dismissal so that they can support program leaders and help parents find a better fit for their child.



## **Mountaineers Adventure Club Volunteers**

The Mountaineers Adventure Club relies on volunteers to provide our youth participants with the best possible mentorship to help them develop technical skills, leadership skills and competence in the outdoors. All volunteers play a vital role in the success of our program. THANK YOU for volunteering!

### **Food**

During day trips, please bring your own lunch. During overnight trips, we will feed you breakfast and dinner. Please bring your own lunch.

### **Camping**

We welcome volunteers to join us at our campsite! You are welcome to hang with the kids, spend time with the other adult volunteers, or hang out by yourself.

### **Dogs**

There are some MAC trips where volunteers' dogs are okay to come and others where dogs are not appropriate for a variety of reasons. If you wish/need to bring your dog, please check with the MAC staff first.

### **Things to Know**

We have a strict "no drugs, alcohol or tobacco" policy that we ask all volunteers to adhere to while you're volunteering. This includes at the campsite.

Please use appropriate language and keep comments and stories "PG", even if you are only talking to other adult volunteers. We are committed to a diverse and inclusive program. This means that we welcome participants and volunteers of all backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnicities, vocations, family models and lifestyles. We ask that volunteers, including parents, acknowledge this diversity and refrain from conversations that may be perceived as offensive to others.

### **Chaperones**

On all of our trips, parents and sponsoring adults act as chaperones. Chaperoning a trip is fun and does not require technical skill, though it can be an opportunity to learn and play alongside the kids. Chaperones have several responsibilities:

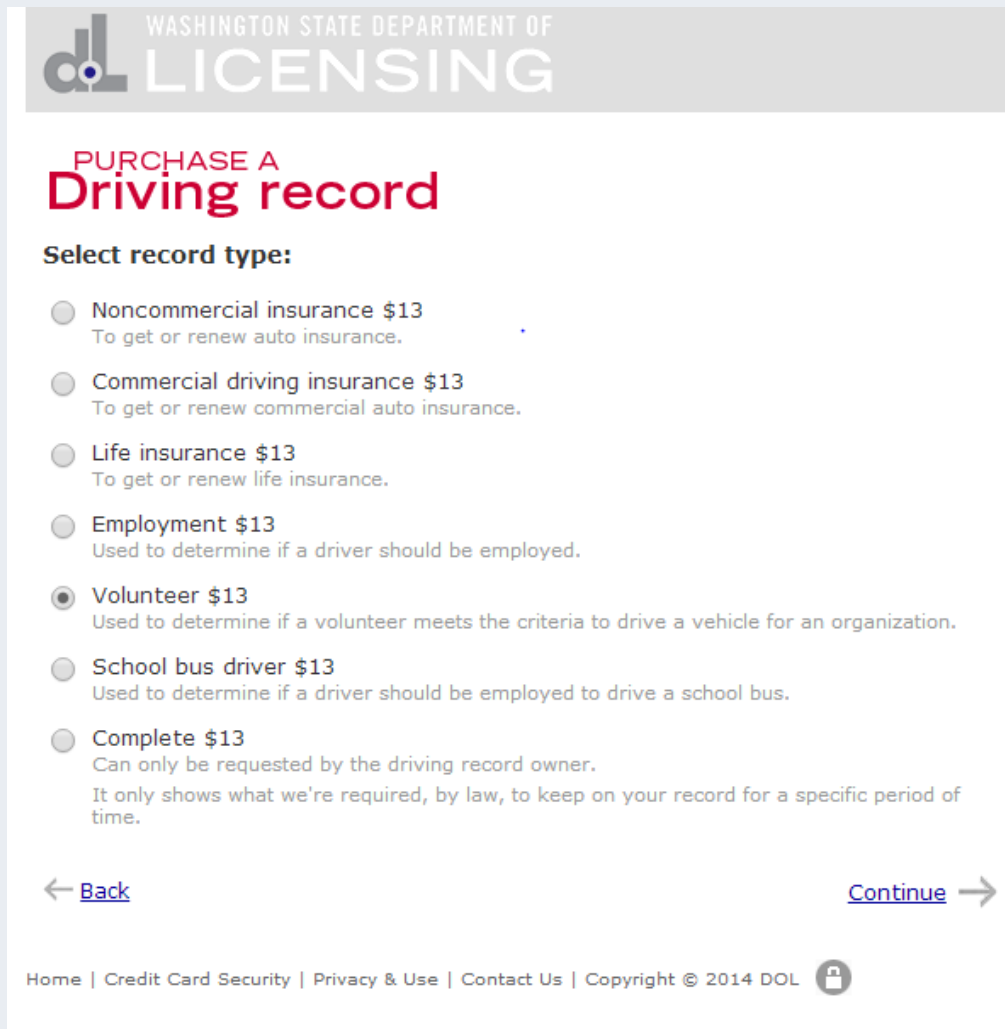
### **Drive**

Most of our trips happen outside of Seattle, and we rely on chaperones to drive youth and/or gear. Chaperones will be reimbursed at a rate of \$.24/mile. Note: when driving youth, whether to/from the Program Center or to/from a campground, it is very important that all youth are accounted for before *any* drivers leave.

### **Transportation Policies**

All adults driving youth as part of a Mountaineers program must be at least 21 years old, carry a valid US Drivers License, carry a minimum of \$300,000 in auto insurance, and have a driving history free of major violations. The Mountaineers will keep copies of drivers licenses, insurance policies and driving record on file.

Note: To purchase a driving record, visit <https://fortress.wa.gov/dol/dsdiadr/>. The process takes less than 5 minutes to complete. On the last screen, be sure to request an emailed record. Forward that email to [sarahm@mountaineers.org](mailto:sarahm@mountaineers.org) who will file the driver record and reimburse the cost for the driving record.




WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

**PURCHASE A Driving record**

Select record type:

- Noncommercial insurance \$13  
To get or renew auto insurance.
- Commercial driving insurance \$13  
To get or renew commercial auto insurance.
- Life insurance \$13  
To get or renew life insurance.
- Employment \$13  
Used to determine if a driver should be employed.
- Volunteer \$13  
Used to determine if a volunteer meets the criteria to drive a vehicle for an organization.
- School bus driver \$13  
Used to determine if a driver should be employed to drive a school bus.
- Complete \$13  
Can only be requested by the driving record owner.  
It only shows what we're required, by law, to keep on your record for a specific period of time.

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When transporting youth, all laws must be followed without exception. This includes speed limits, seatbelt laws and not using cell phones unless pulled over in a safe location

Vehicles transporting youth must have current registration

12-passenger and 15-passenger vans are not approved means of transportation

Vehicles transporting youth must have one working seatbelt per passenger

When driving more than 2 hours, *one* of the following conditions must be met:

Driver must not have participated in more than 6 hours of activity prior to driving.

At least two drivers over the age of 21 must be in the car, and switch driving at minimum every 90 minutes.

If neither of the above conditions can be met, driver **MUST** stop driving to rest for a minimum of 20 minutes at least every 90 minutes.



### Attendance check

Chaperones will receive a list of trip participants ahead of time, and will share in the responsibility for knowing where all participants are at all times.

### Supervise prep work

As participants arrive, help ensure they have the gear they need, listed on the trip sheet. Help to facilitate the packing of cars and group gear. On multiday trips, there is prep work to be done for meals and for each day. We need chaperones to help facilitate this.

### Supervise clean-up

When we return to the program center after a trip, there may be personal gear to be sorted out and group gear to be put away. During multiday trips, there is clean-up to be done after each meal as well as at the end of each day. We need chaperones' help with both of these things.

### Other

Chaperones are usually welcome to participate in whatever activity is happening – whether it's a skills session or an outdoor adventure. This is not a requirement unless the chaperone is also a leader.

In some cases (such as a backpacking trip), chaperones may double as leaders.

### **Instructors**

Skills instructors must meet the minimum requirements for instructing at that level within The Mountaineers. For example, Basic Alpine Climbing skills are taught by instructors who have finished the Basic Alpine Climbing Course. All skills instruction is overseen and vetted by a lead instructor who meets the minimum standards within The Mountaineers.

### Instructors

Instructors will receive an email detailing the subject to be covered and the plan for the day. Instructors will also receive a brief profile on the group they'll be teaching, and the name of the Lead Instructor for the day. When instructors arrive, they should check in with the lead instructor, help to set up, and plan to spend most of their time *mentoring* older youth to teach younger youth.

### Lead Instructors

Lead Instructors will receive an email detailing the plan for instruction, profiles of the youth attending, and a list of the other instructors who will be helping. The Lead Instructor's main job is to manage a safe environment, ensure instruction is within Mountaineers minimum standards, and report back to Mountaineers Adventure Club staff leadership about how each student is progressing towards mastery of the skills being taught.

In most instances, there will be a 1:3 ratio of student teachers to students. Meaning – 30% of the youth will have previous mastery of the skills taught and will be there as "student teachers," teaching the skills to their peers, under the guidance of volunteer instructors.





## Leaders and Assistant Leaders

All of our technical trips require a leader who has been vetted by The Mountaineers to be present, leading, teaching and overseeing activities. Leaders will receive an email detailing the plan for instruction, profiles of the youth attending, and, where relevant, a list of the other leaders and assistant leaders who will be helping. Leaders will work together with Mountaineers Staff to develop a specific plan for the day.

### At The Crag

Mountaineers Adventure Club spends many days a year at the crag – top roping, learning to lead, and multipitch climbing. MAC members are all at different skill levels: some are learning how to belay, some are learning to clean and rappel, some can lead on sport, some are learning to lead on trad. Some members have assistant-taught some of these skills, and others have done enough “mentored leads” that they are able to teach these skills unsupervised. *Never assume a student has skills that have not been verified by you, another leader, or a MAC staff member.*

Before a trip (even a day-trip to a crag), you will receive an email from MAC staff providing a plan for the trip and a profile of each student you’ll be working with, along with a recommendation for what would be a good thing for each student to work on. We always encourage our students to learn new things, but we also allow them to make their own decisions based on their personal goals and comfort level.

The email might look something like this:

Saturday plan for Vantage:

Feathers (**leaders: Mary, Lisa, Akash**) – Ralph, Bella, Mike, Sally, Marlie, Jack (the goal is to have warm-up climbs for everyone, opportunities for some warm-up mock leads and then possibly leads for Sally, Marlie and Mike, and great stations to teach clean & rappel)

Lower Millenium (**leaders: Laurie, Chris, Matt**)– Rylie, Chance, Adam, Carrie, Ishara, Rhys (this group has climbed quite a bit at vantage so this should be a newer area for them. Rylie is a strong leader. Chance is a good leader. Adam is solid but probably needs easier grades (5.8 or below). Carrie & Ishara should get some mock leads in if possible, and Rhys if he is interested, which he may not be. Rylie, Chance and Adam should be able to clean & rappel with verbal guidance – they have done it a lot. Might be good to run through it on the ground first. Carrie & Ishara will have a chance Sunday, and Rhys I don’t think is there yet)

Kotick Memorial (**leaders: Jed, Kelvin, Margot**) – Shane, John Paul, Ayumi, Morgan, Dan, Annika (this should be a good warm-up area for this group. Annika is new and needs to be belay-checked, though she does have some experience. Shane and John Paul have some limited leading experience and should mock lead for sure. Ayumi actually has quite a bit of experience. All three should be leading by the end of the day, and Morgan, Dan and Annika will likely be interested in mock leading. Please do not have kids lead Prince of Darkness unless you clip the first bolt for them. Shane, John Paul & Ayumi are ready to practice clean & rappel. They have minimal experience, so best to find a climb like the 5.9 with the ledge where one of you can be up there with them, or perhaps the chimney where its easy to give guidance from the ground. Shane, John Paul & Ayumi are all eager to learn things, but not the first to say when something makes them nervous and/or may not be aware that they aren’t ready. So, run things through on the ground, and if they say they know how to do something, make them show you first!)

As a leader, you make the final call from a safety perspective. We typically start the day with some quick names and discussion of goals, so the youth are on the same page as the leaders. If a student asks to do something, and you are not sure that they have the prerequisite skills, ask them to list their experience to you and have them demonstrate first.



At the end of the trip, MAC staff like to debrief with each leader to hear how each of the students did, so that we can track it and know what's most appropriate for them in terms of skill building, confidence building, independence and leadership.

### Leading a Climb, Scramble or Ski Trip

Leading a Climb, Scramble or Ski Trip with Mountaineers Adventure Club members is similar to leading the same trip with adults. Here are some things to know:

Leaders select the trip and date, and let MAC staff know. On occasion, we ask for a particular climb on a particular date.

Leaders post the trip online, calling out in the Leader Notes that it is a trip designed for Mountaineers Adventure Club teen members, and others can register if space allows. The trip should be listed as open for registration 2 weeks before the activity. MAC staff will assign youth to the trip and add them to the roster before it opens.

Leaders can choose to find their own assistant leaders/rope leaders, or MAC staff can help to find them. Unlike adult students, youth who have demonstrated competency in all of the Basic Alpine Skills do *not* inherently have a ticket to all Basic Climbs. Each Basic Climb is very different – in length, physical difficulty, exposure, technical terrain... and we want to ensure that students will be successful, and that we set our leaders up for a safe and enjoyable trip. Youth are selected by MAC staff for the trip with the following goals in mind:

Ensuring the greatest likelihood of success. Inviting students who have demonstrated the physical, emotional and technical readiness for the particular trip. Choosing a team that will work well together.

Inviting students who've had less opportunity than others to get on trips of this type.

Inviting students who are eager to do this type of trip.

Inviting students we believe *should* do this trip in preparation for a future goal.

Once the roster is complete, MAC staff will send student profiles including their skills and experience, contact information and emergency contact information, to the leader. MAC staff then does an introductory email between the leader and the students and parents on the roster. PLEASE COPY MAC STAFF ON ALL COMMUNICATIONS so that we can help coordinate as needed.

On the trip, please note that youth participants are *less likely* to ask questions about a decision or ask for what they need (like a water break). Please try to include youth participants in the decision making, even though as the leader, you have the final call. Please also try to check in with students a little more often than you would with adult students.

After the trip, we appreciate a quick email or phone call so we know how the trip went and anything important we should know about the kids.

## Youth & Family Policies

Ed. October 2014

### Policy Statement

It is the policy of The Mountaineers to run youth programs where appropriate and reasonable safeguards are taken to protect the safety and welfare of youth participants and adult leaders.

### Definitions

“Youth” refers to any individual under the age of 18

“Youth Leader” refers to any adult age 18 and over who volunteers or is paid to work directly with Youth on a regular basis in a supervisory or leadership role.

“Frequent Adult Helper” refers to any adult age 18 and over who participates in an identified Youth or Family program with or without their own children on more than one occasion.

“Adult Volunteer” refers to any adult age 18 or over who participates in an identified Youth or Family Program with or without their own children – including Youth Leaders, Frequent Adult Helpers *and* first-time volunteers.

“Chaperone” refers to an adult from a partnering agency.

“Internal Youth Program” refers to Youth programs organized solely by the Mountaineers, wherein Youth are registered individually for the program.

“Youth Partner Program” refers to Youth programs offered to groups of Youth in partnerships with non-Mountaineer programs or organizations, such as school groups, scout troops, clubs, etc.

“Family Program” refers to programs offered to Mountaineers Members in which parents and children participate together, and Youth are directly supervised by a parent, guardian or another adult designated by their parents or guardian.

“Public Program” refers to programs offered to the general public, in which any Youth participants are directly supervised by a responsible adult, and the Mountaineers is not responsible for the supervision of Youths, for example Winter Trails Day.

“Youth Participants in Adult Programs” refers to any Youth aged 14 to 17 participating in a program designed for participants over 18, and is dealt with in its own policy document.

### Application

#### **General Youth Policies**

All Youth participants and adult chaperones and instructors in Mountaineers activities must have on file a signed Individual Acknowledgement of Risk and Waiver of Liability current within one calendar year.

All Youth participating in Mountaineers activities without the presence of their own parent or guardian must have a signed “Mountaineers Health and Emergency Permission” form on site during the activity. Exception: Youth Partner Programs. In Youth Partner Programs, the partnering agency chaperones assume responsibility for the overall health and safety of the participating youth.

Youth may not bring the following items to any Mountaineers program under any circumstances: illegal drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, and weapons. Youth may risk dismissal from program and/or have items confiscated for violation of this policy.

The Mountaineers are not responsible for lost, stolen or broken items. Youth are encouraged to leave electronics and other expensive items at home.

Youth are expected to wear appropriate attire during Mountaineers programs. Questions about appropriate attire should be directed to the Youth Leader.

In Youth and Family Programs that take place in water greater than 3’ deep, there must be one adult designated “water watcher” per 10 youth and/or one certified Lifeguard per 25 youth. Boating activities must follow all state and local boating laws, and all participants (adults and Youth) must wear properly fitted personal floatation devices at all times. All participants under the age of 18 in swimming programs must be swim tested by a lifeguard before participating in swimming activities.

All participants in Youth and Family Programs must be free from contagious illness.



## Youth and Family Policies Continued

### General Youth Leader & Frequent Adult Helper Policies

All Youth Leaders and Frequent Adult Helpers must be Qualified Youth Leaders. This includes:

Complete a background check which includes a SS# scan for aliases, a federal criminal background check and a national sex offender registry check.

Read and agree to comply with the Mountaineers Youth Policies and Working with Youth Manual

Youth Leaders are, by state law, mandated reporters when another volunteer is suspected or alleged to have caused abuse or neglect to a Youth under the age of 18. All Youth Leaders must read the Washington State document “Protecting the Abused & Neglected Child: A Guide for Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect”.

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/publications/22-163.pdf>

Youth Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all Frequent Adult Helpers are Qualified Youth Leaders.

Youth Leaders and Frequent Adult Helpers shall ensure that Youth are appropriately supervised, which includes maintaining a safe environment and informing other Adult Volunteers and Chaperones of their responsibilities.

Adult Volunteers and Chaperones shall not abuse Youths including:

Physical abuse – strike, spank, shake, slap;

Verbal abuse – humiliate, degrade, threaten;

Sexual abuse – inappropriate touch or verbal exchange

Mental abuse – shaming, withholding love, cruelty;

Neglect – withholding food, water, basic care, etc.

Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate termination of membership. Secret organizations, hazing and corporal punishment are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Mountaineer activity.

Adult Volunteers and Chaperones are to respond to Youths with respect and consideration and treat all Youths equally regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family style or culture.

Adult Volunteers and Chaperones will respect Youths’ rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Youths are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

Adult Volunteers must wear appropriate attire while working with Youth.

Adult Volunteers will refrain from inappropriate displays of affection towards others in the presence of Youths, parents and staff.

Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working with Youth is prohibited.

Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of Youths or parents during Youth and Family Program hours is prohibited.

Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one’s personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of Youth or parents are prohibited.

All volunteers in Youth and Family Programs must be free of psychological or physical conditions (e.g. tuberculosis, post-traumatic stress syndrome) that might adversely affect the Youth participants’ physical or mental health. If in doubt, Mountaineers staff should consult a doctor or appropriate expert.

All Adult Volunteers in Youth Programs will portray a positive role model for Youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.

Adult Volunteers may not be alone with Youth they initially meet at Mountaineers Programs outside of The Mountaineers.

This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting Youth to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrative approval.

Adult Volunteers may not date or pursue any type of exclusive relationship with program participants under the age of 18.



## Youth and Family Policies Continued

### Internal Youth Programs

Mountaineers Health and Emergency Permission forms will be kept on file at the Program Center for all participating Youth Members, participating children of Members, and participating registered guests. These must be current within two years of the dates of the Youth's participation. As referenced above, a copy of this form is to be held on-site during a Youth or Family Program.

Youth under the age of 14 participating in drop-off programs where Mountaineers staff and volunteers are directly responsible for the Youth participants must be signed in by Mountaineers hosts and signed out by a person listed on the Youth's membership as an authorized pick-up. In the event that this practice is impractical, specific alternate procedures must be written and signed by the parents/guardians of program participants. Under no circumstance should Youth be released to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian in writing.

Any transportation occurring during a Youth or Family Program must utilize vehicles that are adequately insured and maintained and operated in a safe and responsible manner.

At no time during a Mountaineers program may any adult be alone with a single Youth (other than their own) where they cannot be observed by others. In exceptional circumstances (such as on a multipitch climb), unavoidable instances of an adult being alone with a youth should be anticipated in advance and program should be designed to mitigate risks to the youth and adult.

When camping, sleeping quarters should be designed and programmed for appropriate supervision. In general, no Youth is permitted to sleep in the sleeping area of an adult other than his or her own parent, guardian or sibling unless a parent or guardian has signed a waiver ahead of time allowing this for an overnight trip. Exception: teen programs during which youth participants turn 18 have specific procedures, outlined in "Young Adults in Youth Programs".

Restroom Supervision outside of Mountaineers facilities: whenever possible, send two or more Youths to the bathroom with a parent, chaperone, Youth Leader or Frequent Adult Helper. In restrooms with multiple stalls, Youth Leaders and Frequent Adult Helpers will make sure the bathroom appears safe before allowing Youths to use the facilities. Youth Leaders will stand in the doorway while the Youths are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the Youths and protection for the Youth leaders and Frequent Adult Helpers.

In drop-off programs, when possible Youth Leaders and Frequent Adult Helpers should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs – diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not possible, Youth Leaders and Frequent Adult Helpers should be positioned so that they are visible to others.

### External Youth Programs

Groups must be asked to provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance from their insurance carrier stating that the group will be covered during the dates of The Mountaineers program.

Group leaders must sign a Group Use Agreement prior to the date of the program.

Groups should prepare to have at least one vehicle on site for emergency transportation. The Mountaineers cannot take responsibility for transporting participants. In the event of an injury or emergency, participants will need to be transported off-site by an ambulance to a medical facility if a group does not come with transportation.

All participants must have signed Mountaineers Health and Emergency Permission forms or suitable substitute including a permission to treat signature on site for the duration of the program. (school health forms and/or agency health forms are typically suitable substitutes) These forms are retained by the group leader. The Mountaineers will not collect these forms.

### Responsibilities

Executive Director and human resources is responsible for administering background checks and collecting and keeping forms and dealing with identified problems.

Education Director is responsible for providing updated training materials.

Division, branch or staff sponsor of activities are responsible for administering this policy and identifying and reporting problems.

## Youth Participating in Adult Program Policies

Ed. October 2014

### Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Mountaineers to allow youth to participate in adult programs as long as the below requirements are met and participants, guardians and leaders are aware of the inherent risks for youth participating in programs designed for adults.

### Definitions

“Youth” refers to any individual under the age of 18

“Leader” in this document refers to any adult age 18 and over who volunteers or is paid to work directly with Youth on a regular basis in programs that primarily serve adults.

“Youth Participants in Adult Programs” refers to any Youth aged 14 to 17, participating in a program designed for participants over 18.

### Application

#### **General Youth Policies**

All Youth participants and adult chaperones and instructors in Mountaineers activities must have on file a signed Individual Acknowledgement of Risk and Waiver of Liability current within one calendar year.

All Youth participating in Mountaineers activities without the presence of their own parent or guardian must have a signed “Mountaineers Health and Emergency Permission” form on site during the activity.

Youth may not bring the following items to any Mountaineers program under any circumstances: illegal drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, and weapons. Youth may risk dismissal from program and/or have items confiscated for violation of this policy.

The Mountaineers are not responsible for lost, stolen or broken items. Youth are encouraged to leave electronics and other expensive items at home.

Youth are expected to wear appropriate attire during Mountaineers programs. Questions about appropriate attire should be directed to the Youth Leader.

#### **General Leader Policies for Youth in Adult Programs**

All Leaders who will be working closely with youth must be a Mountaineers Qualified Youth Leader.

Leaders are, by state law, mandated reporters when another volunteer is suspected or alleged to have caused abuse or neglect to a Youth under the age of 18. All Leaders must read the Washington State document “Protecting the Abused & Neglected Child: A Guide for Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect” annually.

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/publications/22-163.pdf>

Leaders shall ensure that Youth are appropriately supervised.

Leaders shall not abuse Youths including:

Physical abuse – strike, spank, shake, slap;

Verbal abuse – humiliate, degrade, threaten;

Sexual abuse – inappropriate touch or verbal exchange

Mental abuse – shaming, withholding love, cruelty;

Neglect – withholding food, water, basic care, etc.

Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate termination of membership. Secret organizations, hazing and corporal punishment are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Mountaineer activity.

Adult Volunteers are to respond to Youths with respect and consideration and treat all Youths equally regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family style or culture.

Leaders will respect Youths’ rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no.

Youths are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

Leaders must wear appropriate attire while working with Youth.

Leaders will refrain from inappropriate displays of affection towards others in the presence of Youths, parents and staff.

## Youth Participating in Adult Program Policies Continued

Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working with Youth is prohibited.

Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of Youths is prohibited.

Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of Youth or parents are prohibited.

Leaders may not be alone with Youth they initially meet at Mountaineers Programs outside of The Mountaineers. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting Youth to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrative approval.

All volunteers in Adult Programs with Youth participants must be free of psychological or physical conditions (e.g., tuberculosis, post-traumatic stress disorder) that might adversely affect the Youth participants' physical or mental health. If in doubt, Mountaineers staff should consult a doctor or appropriate expert.

All volunteers in Adult Programs with Youth participants will portray a positive role model for Youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.

Leaders may not date program participants under the age of 18.

### **Youth Participants in Adult Programs**

Youth participants in Adult Programs should be a minimum of age 14.

Program Leaders can choose to not allow youth in their programs

Youth must receive permission from the Leader to participate in Adult Programs and must sign a special permission form.

Youth participant, youth guardian, adult participants and other volunteers will be informed of the inherent risks of participating in programs with Youth participants.

The Leader is responsible for insuring that Youth Participants in Adult Programs are not in the presence of inebriated participants.

Mountaineers Health and Emergency Permission forms will be kept on file at the Program Center for all participating Youth Members, participating children of Members and participating registered guests. These must be current within two years of the dates of the Youth's participation. As referenced above, a copy of this form is to be held on-site during a Program, usually in the Youth Participant's personal first aid kit.

Any transportation occurring during an Adult Program with Youth participants must utilize vehicles that are adequately insured and maintained and operated in a safe and responsible manner.

At no time during a Mountaineers program may any adult be alone with a single Youth (other than their own) where they cannot be observed by others. In exceptional circumstances (such as on a multipitch climb), unavoidable instances of an adult being alone with a youth should be anticipated in advance and program should be designed to mitigate risks to the youth and adult.

When camping, sleeping quarters should be designed and programmed for appropriate supervision. In general, no Youth is permitted to sleep in the sleeping area of an adult other than his or her own parent, guardian or sibling unless a parent or guardian has signed a waiver ahead of time allowing this for an overnight trip.

Restroom Supervision: the Leader is responsible for ensuring safety in restrooms.

In the absence of a parent, guardian, or certified Lifeguard, in Adult Programs when Youth are participating in activities that take place in water greater than 3' deep, one adult Leader or instructor must be designated to directly supervise and be within rescue reach from the Youth. Boating activities must follow all state and local boating laws, and all participants (adults and Youth) must wear properly fitted personal floatation devices at all times. All participants under the age of 18 in swimming programs must be swim tested by a lifeguard before participating in swimming activities.

### **Responsibilities**

Executive Director and human resources is responsible for administering background checks and collecting and keeping forms and dealing with identified problems.

Education Director is responsible for providing updated training materials.

Division, branch or staff sponsor of activities are responsible for administering this policy and identifying and reporting problems.