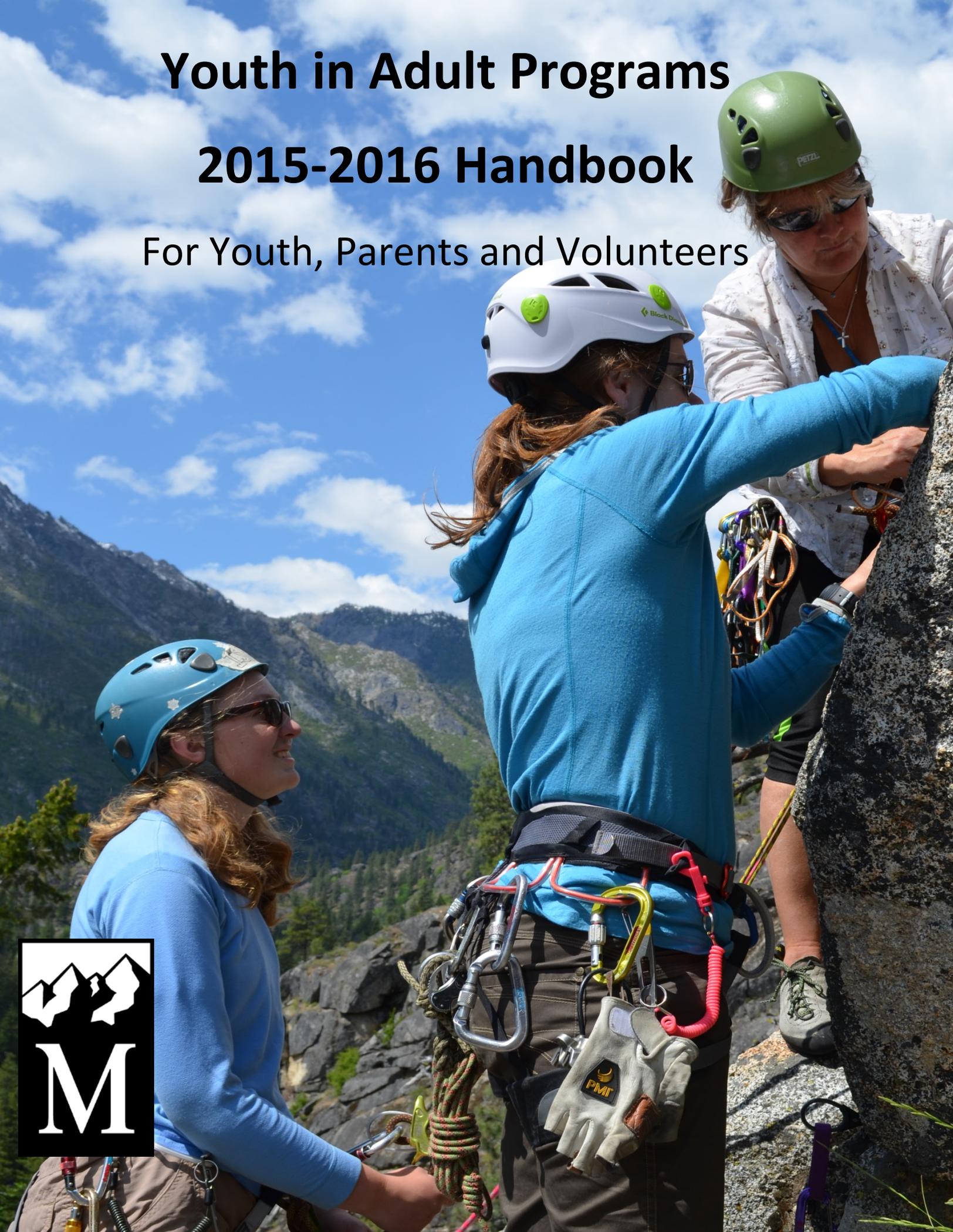


# Youth in Adult Programs

## 2015-2016 Handbook

For Youth, Parents and Volunteers



## **Participant Commitment**

Youth who are participating in adult programs without an accompanying adult will be given the same freedoms and responsibilities as all other participants. When youth participate in an adult program with an accompanying adult, the accompanying adult makes a commitment to ensure the youth is an active and respectful participant. In both instances, youth are expected to be on time and prepared for trips, lectures and field trips, to ask questions and to let leaders know if they are uncomfortable.

## **Parent/Sponsoring Adult Commitment**

Adults sponsoring youth participating in adult programs play a key role in supporting the youth participant's success. Whether accompanying the youth or not, sponsoring adults should check in with the youth and the instructors on a regular basis to see how things are going. We ask sponsoring adults to be partners with our volunteers in creating a successful outdoor education experience for the youth participant.

When parents are accompanying youth in an adult program, we encourage parents to become Qualified Youth Leaders so that they are informed in best practices for keeping their child safe in an adult-centered outdoor program.

## **Carpooling & Transportation**

While we do not arrange transportation for youth to and from the Mountaineers Program Center (or other designated meeting place), we do encourage carpooling.

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

Course meetings, field trips and activities start and end at varied times. Youth are expected to show up on time at the trip meeting place (often the Mountaineers Seattle Program Center). At the end of the event, youth are dismissed with the rest of the students. Mountaineers volunteers will stay at the program site until all youth have left. Parents will be given an option to indicate up to three adults that The Mountaineers can release their child to. If the parent does not request that The Mountaineers monitor who their child leaves the program with, Mountaineers leaders need only stay at the program site until the youth participant leaves, and they are not responsible for monitoring the youth participant's mode of transportation.

It is the responsibility of the primary caregiver to ensure that a youth participant is picked up on time. If the designated pick-up person is more than 10 minutes late, and The Mountaineers have not heard from them, program leaders will begin calling emergency contacts, beginning with the primary caregiver. After 3 hours, if The Mountaineers have not been able to reach any person at any of the contact numbers listed on the participant's paperwork, The Mountaineers will call CPS to arrange for a place for the child to stay for the night.

## **Electronics**

Cell phones, music and video games are typically not a part of the Mountaineers programs. They detract from the wilderness experience and from the community. Youth are encouraged to leave all electronics out of sight (or at home) during Mountaineers programs. Youth who choose to use cell phones, gps units or other electronics may do so as long as it creates no disruption of the wilderness experience for others. The Mountaineers is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronics.

## **Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco**

In Mountaineers adult programs, adult participants are often permitted to use alcohol or tobacco as long as it does not compromise the safety of the group. Typically this is at camp at night. There will always be a designated leader who refrains from consumption of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs at all times in order to provide reliable supervision for the youth. Youth participants are never permitted to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco while on Mountaineers programs. Youth who have or are under the influence of these will be sent home immediately and dismissed from the program without refund. Youth dismissed from the program for possession of drugs, alcohol or tobacco may return the following year on a probationary basis.

## **Medication**

Medication prescribed by a licensed medical professional must be reported to The Mountaineers using the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form. This information will be shared with instructors who are leading any trip that the youth is participating in. If the doctor does *not* authorize the youth to self-administer, the medication will be kept with adult leaders, who will administer the medication according to the doctor's orders. All controlled medication and medication requiring hypodermic needle administration (with the exception of Epipens which may be carried by the youth) must be stored with parents or Mountaineers Leaders. All medication must be current and kept in its original bottle.

Over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antacids or topical antibiotics may be kept by youth participants in their personal first aid kits. These medications should be listed on the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form and kept in a clearly marked container with expiration date.

Mountaineers volunteers may carry over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antihistamine, antacids or topical antibiotics. Volunteer leaders may provide these medications to youth as needed unless otherwise indicated on the youth's health form. All medication administration should be recorded in a notebook in the first aid kit.

## **Medical Clearance**

Mountaineers members spend a lot of time in remote areas and on technical terrain, where group safety is paramount. In some instances, Mountaineers leaders may require medical clearance and/or instructions from a licensed medical professional in order for a youth to participate in the program. Examples include but are not limited to: injuries, surgery, eating disorders, psychological & nervous disorders, developmental disorders, heart conditions, diabetes. Mountaineers leaders will disclose this information only to the people who need to have it in order to maintain a safe environment. In some cases, Mountaineers leaders may, at their discretion, forbid participation on a trip if they feel the circumstances of the trip make it too difficult to safely manage the participant's medical needs or limitations.

## **Leaders and Instructors**

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. 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.

### **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 and need adult mentorship.

Youth might not speak up when they feel uncomfortable.

Youth who attend 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 youth often to make sure they are comfortable and okay.

### **Special Forms**

Youth in adult programs must have the following forms signed, with one copy sent to staff to be filed with the youths’ membership forms, and one copy kept by the program leader. Please remember that these forms are personal and confidential, and leaders must be careful not to disclose information unnecessarily.

- Youth Health Form and Permission to Treat (2 pages). We recommend that a third copy of this form be kept in the youth’s personal first aid kit.
- Acknowledgement of Risks and Waiver and Release of Liability for Youth Participating in Adult-Oriented Programming (2 pages)
- Drop-off and Pick-up form
- Medication Authorization form(s) – one per medication. We recommend that a third copy of this form be kept in the youth’s personal first aid kit.
- OTC Medication Administration Authorization Form
- Special Circumstances Form (2 pages)

All of these forms can be found in the “Youth in Adult Programs Parent Packet” on the Mountaineers website.

### **Qualified Youth Leader**

Leaders of programs that welcome youth must be Qualified Youth Leaders. To do this, visit

[www.mountaineers.org/QYLtraining](http://www.mountaineers.org/QYLtraining). Below are some pieces of our youth policies manual that are particularly relevant to youth participating in Adult Programs.

## **Forms and Paperwork**

Every Youth must have on file our standard Health and Permission to Treat Form, as well as any pertinent medication authorization forms (including permission to apply sunscreen). Other forms we require for youth participants in adult programs include:

- Health and Permission to Treat Form – parents give basic medical history for their child, including red flags and allergies, and sign a statement granting health care providers permission to treat the child in an emergency even if we cannot reach the parents. **It is important that this form is quickly accessible to hand to a medical professional should an accident or injury occur.**
- Youth Participating in Adult-Oriented Programming Release and Waiver, including photo release.
- Drop-off & Pick-up Form – parents can opt to allow their child to leave with any adult (or transport themselves – walk home, take the bus, etc), or they can designate specific people who are authorized to pick up their child at the end of a program. If the parent requests that we monitor who the participant leaves with, Mountaineers staff and volunteers must ensure (and may check ID) that we release youth participants only to those people designated on the child’s drop-off & pick-up form.
- Adult Supervisors Form – Youth under 14 must have an accompanying adult in a Mountaineers adult program. On this form, parents either sign acknowledging that their child is 14 or older, or they submit a list of adults who may act as accompanying adults in the program. They certify that they have informed these adults that they are the child’s supervisor. It is important that program leaders know who is on this list as the child’s accompanying adult(s).
- Special Circumstances – parents list any confidential circumstances or needs their child has. Parents also specifically designate who this information may be disclosed to, and it is critical that our staff and volunteers honor those requests.
- Disaster Preparedness Form – parents list an out of state contact and any medical circumstances we may need to know in the event that we must care for their child for an extended period of time due to a natural disaster such as an earthquake.

It is important that Youth in Adult Programs leaders have read the forms submitted by the parents and file them in a way that they are accessible. The blank forms can be found at [www.mountaineers.org/YPIAPforms](http://www.mountaineers.org/YPIAPforms)

## **Supervision**

Children and Youth under the age of 18 are NEVER left unsupervised. Young children (usually under 14) should be in the sight/sound of a trained adult at all times, including during bathroom breaks. All youth 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 of youth 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 they have moved to another adult’s group.

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.

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

### 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.

### Health History & Medications

The Youth Participating in Adult Programs Parent Packet includes all of the forms needed for youth to participate in adult programs. One copy of the completed forms should be available on-site, either with the youth or the program leader, and one copy of the completed forms should be filed at the Mountaineers Program Center in Seattle. The forms can be found at [www.mountaineers.org/youth/youth-forms/YPIAP](http://www.mountaineers.org/youth/youth-forms/YPIAP)

All participants must have on file a medical history current within one year.

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. When older youth are participating in adult programs, it's a good idea for the youth to keep a copy of their medical history and permission to treat form in their personal first aid kit.

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 the parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers. Time and dosage should be logged.

Hypodermic needles that are required for medical administration and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers in secure

storage and administration must be supervised by parents or Mountaineers adult 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 or if the parents are present. 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 will 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.

### 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.

### Overnight Programs

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 youth, 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 youth know how to get to the bathroom and know 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 youth have working light sources and whistles should they get lost on their way back from the bathroom.

### Alpine and 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 added benefit is 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.