Appendix E: Team Travel and Overnight Activities

Lead coaches are responsible for ensuring compliance with these requirements as well as any requirements of the hosting organization.

Local Travel to Team Activities

Primary responsibility for transportation to and from routine team activities rests with the parent or guardian, unless the team has established an approved transportation plan.

Youth participants may only leave a team activity with:

- A parent/guardian, or
- An authorized adult designated in advance, or
- With documented permission consistent with team procedures.

Teams should maintain clear sign-in/sign-out procedures appropriate for the age of participants.

Travel to Team Activities Away from Home and/or Overnight

TRIP PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

When transporting team members to and from places other than those where the team ordinarily meets, or staying overnight away from home teams must implement the following safety practices when planning travel:

- Obtain written parent/guardian permission that includes:
  - Destination and itinerary.
  - Transportation arrangements.
  - Lodging details and room assignments.
  - Names and contact information of supervising adults.
  - Emergency contact information.
- Parents must be informed of any material changes to travel plans.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Youth participants and adults should carry appropriate identification as required by the destination. Teams should maintain a centralized roster including:
  - Emergency contacts.
  - Medical considerations.
  - Room assignments.
  - Travel groups.

HEALTH, ACCESS (PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES), AND INCLUSION

Adults should ensure dignity, privacy, and welcoming experience for all participants.

- Provisions for team members' needs, including access (persons with disabilities), medical conditions, allergies (food and other allergies) and other accommodations should be made in advance of the trip, including written authorization from parents/guardians to administer any medications.



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

- Every driver (transporting team members other than him or herself) should be 18 or older, with a valid driver's license and a driving history demonstrating safe driving ability, and drive a registered, inspected vehicle, with at least the minimum insurance required by the state or country in which the vehicle is registered. This also applies to hired drivers and hired vehicles. If using hired transportation, only vetted and reputable companies should be used (limit use of rideshare companies).
- Every driver must have a designated emergency contact. And, a clear communication plan in case of delay or incident.
- Every passenger should ride in a legal seat, wearing a seat belt at all times.
- In case of an emergency or delay, the driver should have directions and a designated contact person.
- Avoid one-on-one transportation of a youth participant when possible.
- Rideshare services (e.g., Uber/Lyft) should not be used by youth alone; if used, require adult authorization and oversight.
- Teams should establish clear transportation assignments in advance.

SUPERVISION DURING TRAVEL

- A minimum of two Youth Protection cleared adults should be present during team travel whenever feasible.
- Interactions must remain observable and interruptible, including during transportation, lodging, and activities.

PRE-TRIP EXPECTATIONS

Prior to travel, teams must clearly communicate expectations to youth participants and adults, including:

- Remind all travelers the *FIRST* Code of Conduct applies during the trip.
- What to do if a team member is separated from the group.
- What behaviors do you expect and what consequences exist for noncompliance.
- Every team member's privacy should be always respected, including when using the bathroom and changing clothes.
- Digital communication expectations during travel.
  - Use approved communication channels.
  - Avoid private or non-transparent communication.
- Curfew and supervision structure.
  - Clear curfew expectations.
  - Defined supervision responsibilities.
- Reporting expectations.
  - How to report concerns during travel.
  - Who to contact (Lead coach, chaperone, *FIRST* YPP, etc.).

LODGING SAFETY

- Youth participants must be assigned to age-appropriate and approved room groupings.
- Adults and youth must not share sleeping spaces, except were permitted by policy (e.g., parent/child).
- Room assignments should be documented and communicated in advance.
- Hotel/motel room doors should be locked when in the room, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm, before you unlock the door.
- Do not mention or display your room number in the presence of strangers.
- Upon arrival at the overnight accommodations, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with your room key, wallet, and cell phone; take these with you if you must leave the room.
- Conduct a room check after "lights out" to confirm team members are in their assigned rooms.
- Avoid one-on-one situations in rooms or private spaces.
- Adults should not enter youth rooms unless necessary and observable.
- Room checks should be conducted by at least two adults when possible.

YOUTH ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFETY

Youth participants are expected to:

- ✔ Remain with assigned groups unless authorized.
- ✔ Follow curfew and supervision expectations.
- ✔ Report concerns or unsafe situations.

INCIDENT RESPONSE DURING TRAVEL

In the event of a safety concern or incident:

- Ensure immediate safety of all participants.
- Notify supervising adults and Lead coach.
- Contact emergency services when appropriate.
- Report to *FIRST* Youth Protection as required.

Hosting School or Organization Requirements and State Regulations

Schools and organizations participating in *FIRST* programs, and the states and countries in which they operate may have guidelines and safety requirements governing youth-oriented programs such as those offered by *FIRST*. Adults working in *FIRST* programs are required to comply with the youth protection policies of the school or organization hosting the team and the requirements of the states or governments in which the team meets or travels. Contact *FIRST* Youth Protection if you need assistance in obtaining this information.

Where a hosting organization has its own safeguarding or investigation process, teams should cooperate and may defer to those processes as appropriate, while still reporting to *FIRST* Youth Protection.

Teams must comply with:

- Hosting organization policies.
- Local, state/provincial, and national laws.
- Applicable child protection and supervision requirements.