



Youth Protection Policy

I. Purpose

DeMolay is committed to ensuring the safety and security of DeMolay youth participants through dedicated youth protection practices, and a strong youth protection policy.

DeMolay's commitment to the protection of youth helps ensure a safe and positive place for DeMolay members to learn, grow, and become the best possible leaders. DeMolay's goals for its youth protection program include:

- Providing a safe and positive environment for youth participants and other DeMolay participants and stakeholders
- Instilling confidence in DeMolay parents, advisors, volunteers, youth, and the community that DeMolay is a safe and protective environment
- Educating and providing resources about strong youth protection practices

II. Advisor Selection Process

1. Application

All applicants for DeMolay advisor or adult volunteer positions must complete and submit a written application and registration form, which must be submitted to the Executive Officer and DeMolay International headquarters. All applicants must provide references, including contact information for any DeMolay chapters with which the applicant was previously associated. Additionally, each applicant must grant DeMolay permission to conduct a criminal history background check and pay any cost associated with the background check.

2. Training and Education

All applicants must complete the Adult Worker Training Program, and any other continuing education required by the Executive Officer or DeMolay.

3. Criminal History Background Check

DeMolay applicants and volunteers are subject to a criminal history background check when they begin working with DeMolay, and periodically thereafter. Any current employee or volunteer must self-disclose convictions that occur during their service to DeMolay no later than three business days of the conviction. DeMolay requires criminal history background checks between each individual's fourth and fifth year of service at DeMolay. Additionally, DeMolay will run approximately 50 random criminal history background checks per year.

4. Advisor Selection Criteria

Applicants for advisor or adult volunteer positions will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- An applicant must truthfully and accurately complete the advisor selection process required by DeMolay International.
- An individual who has a past history of sexual crimes, child abuse, sexual molestation of children, or convictions for any crime in which children were involved is disqualified from working with DeMolay in any way.
- An individual who has pending charges against him/her involving children is disqualified from working with DeMolay in any way.
- An individual who has a history of violence or sexually exploitive behavior is disqualified from working with DeMolay in any way.
- An individual who was terminated from a paid or volunteer position due to misconduct with a child is disqualified from working with DeMolay in any way.

The conviction for a crime unrelated to the applicant's responsibilities for DeMolay will not automatically result in disqualification from service as a DeMolay advisor or adult volunteer, and is ultimately at the discretion of the Executive Officer, who may consider other factors when evaluating criminal history records. The totality of the record, including the recency of the offense, the completeness of the available information, and the nature of the offense, will be considered when determining whether an applicant should be disqualified.

Any decision regarding applicants or volunteers deemed ineligible for positions at DeMolay will be documented, and kept on record.

5. *DeMolay Advisor Status*

Applicants cannot serve as DeMolay advisors, or volunteer in DeMolay programs or activities until they have undergone all of the above listed processes and have received an acceptance letter and advisor card from DeMolay International.

DeMolay requires each advisor and volunteer to renew their registration materials on an annual basis. Reappointment is not automatic, and is ultimately at the discretion of the Executive Officer.

III. Supervision

1. *Visual Access*

Advisor and adult volunteers should avoid being isolated with individual DeMolay youth. If a conversation between an adult and a DeMolay youth needs to be held in confidence, the adult should select an area where the conversation cannot be overheard, but is in the visual range of others, such as an outdoor clearing, or a windowed room with an open door. Rooms with closed doors, closed tents, motor homes, vehicles or other secluded locations where there is no visual access to others should be avoided.

2. *Two-Deep Leadership*

At least two DeMolay advisors or volunteers must be in attendance on all DeMolay trips, outings and chapter activities.

3. *Rule of Four*

For all DeMolay programs and activities, no fewer than four individuals (at least two adults) should be in attendance. The purpose of this rule is to ensure that in the situation where an incident occurs, one party can stay with the injured party while the other two go for help.

4. *Advisor to Youth Ratio*

At least two DeMolay advisors or volunteers must be in attendance at all DeMolay programs and activities. For groups of 10 or fewer DeMolay youth, two advisors or volunteers are required. For groups of greater than 10, one additional advisor or volunteer is required for every 10 additional youth.

5. *Parental Involvement*

Parents should be notified of all official DeMolay activities. These communications may be verbal, in writing, via phone or via email. Communications should always include the date, location, beginning and ending times for the activity, and contact information for the DeMolay advisors or volunteers who will be in attendance. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to participate in DeMolay activities.

IV. Prohibited Activities

1. *Abuse and Physical Force*

- **Physical violence**—slapping, spanking, corporal punishment and similar behaviors, at DeMolay activities by DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers or by DeMolay youth is prohibited.
- **Sexual contact or behavior**—touching or exposure of an area typically covered by a bathing suit, by DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers or by DeMolay youth is prohibited. This includes patting another person's buttocks, skinny dipping, or "mooning" others. DeMolay advisors and adult volunteers should always change clothes and shower separately from DeMolay youth.
- **Sexually explicit materials**—sexually oriented or pornographic videos, magazines, photographs, games or other media are not permitted at any DeMolay activities.
- **Inappropriate relations**—DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers are strictly prohibited from dating, or engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with children or underage DeMolay youth.
- **Neglect**—DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers are prohibited from punishing DeMolay youth by withholding food, water or medical assistance.

2. *Hazing and Bullying*

Any intentionally harmful behavior directed toward a specific youth or group of youth meant to cause physical danger, intimidate, cause emotional or psychological harm or discomfort, or cause isolation, humiliation or ridicule is prohibited, whether by DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers, or by DeMolay youth. This includes forced consumption or use of any substance, physical force or brutality in any form, confinement, exposure to the elements, sleep deprivation, online humiliation and any other activity that is not consistent with the authorized activities and principles of DeMolay.

3. *Drugs, Alcohol & Stimulants*

The use or possession of mind-altering substances, including alcohol or illegal drugs, or the abuse of over-the-counter or prescription drugs, or any other substance for non-medicinal purposes by DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers, or by DeMolay youth is prohibited during DeMolay activities.

Additionally, energy drinks containing stimulants such as caffeine, ginseng, and guarana are strongly discouraged at DeMolay activities due to potential adverse medical consequences.

4. *Blindfolding*

Hoodwinks or blindfolds are prohibited in all DeMolay ceremonies.

5. *Unauthorized Ceremonies or Organizations*

Only ceremonies published in the DeMolay Ritual, or the Monitor of Ceremonies, or those approved in writing and in advance by the Executive Officer, may be performed. All secret activities, unofficial organizations and unsanctioned ceremonies are not authorized by DeMolay International and are not permitted as part of any DeMolay activity.

6. *Violations*

DeMolay has a Zero Tolerance policy with regard to the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, hazing or any physical, verbal, sexual or emotional abuse of any kind by DeMolay advisors, adult volunteers, or DeMolay youth.

Any violation of these provisions may result in suspension or expulsion from all future DeMolay programs and activities.

Although there is not a definitive list of prohibited offenses, any DeMolay advisor or adult volunteer should expect to be suspended, expelled or disqualified from future participation in DeMolay programs and activities if they:

- (1) Physically, verbally or sexually abuse another person, or allow it to happen
- (2) Endanger the life or well-being of another person (i.e. reckless driving, assault with a weapon), or allow it to happen
- (3) Provide, or allow others to provide illicit substances to another person
- (4) Utilize or allow any kind of hazing or scare tactics in any DeMolay program or activity with the intent to frighten, degrade, humiliate or otherwise harm another person, including through old traditions that are no longer deemed acceptable DeMolay activities

Additionally, if any of these actions violate applicable federal, state or local laws, they will be reported to the appropriate authorities for further investigation and possible prosecution.

V. Activities Requiring Special Approval or Consideration

1. *Physical Contact*

DeMolay advisors and adult volunteer should avoid unnecessary physical contact with DeMolay youth, including, but not limited to, touching the leg of a youth, tickling, and wrestling.

2. *Photography & Videography*

DeMolay advisors and adult volunteers are prohibited from taking photographs or videos of DeMolay youth for personal use, or for posting on personal social media sites. Photographs and videos of DeMolay activities must be representative of the values of the organization and should not be taken or published without the written permission of the DeMolay youth pictured, or the permission of their parents if they are minors.

3. *Activities in Private Homes*

Activities involving DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers and DeMolay youth in private homes should not be conducted without the prior approval of the chapter's Advisory Council and notice and written permission from all parents or legal guardians. During these activities, all DeMolay youth protection provisions, including two-deep leadership, must be followed.

4. *Overnight Trips or Activities*

Any overnight trips or activities require written approval from each DeMolay youth's parent or legal guardian, and can never be held in the residence of a DeMolay advisor or adult volunteer.

DeMolay advisors and adult volunteers may never stay in rooms with youth who are not their children.

It is recommended that DeMolay youth be housed in by age range such as 12-14, 14-16, 15-17, 18-20.

5. *Transportation*

In most situations, DeMolay youth are responsible for arranging for their own transportation to and from DeMolay activities. However, in some situations, a DeMolay adult volunteer may provide transportation for DeMolay youth. In these situations, an adult volunteer may drive a few DeMolay youth home. When the second-to-last DeMolay youth has been dropped off, the last youth should call his parents or legal guardians to notify them of his expected arrival time.

6. *Discipline*

Discipline used during DeMolay programs and activities should be constructive and reflect DeMolay's commitment to teach and emulate respect and responsibility. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

VI. Reporting

1. *Abuse Definition*

DeMolay defines abuse as any action, inaction, or event that endangers or injures the physical, psychological, or emotional well-being of a DeMolay youth.

2. *Disclosed, Suspected or Actual Abuse or Injury*

Any time an incident of abuse or injury is disclosed, alleged or occurs, or if a concern about the potential for abuse or harm arises, the DeMolay advisor or adult volunteer who identified the situation will:

- Call 911 or notify the local child protection agency
- Notify the parents or legal guardians of all youth involved, as directed by the authorities
- Notify the jurisdiction's Executive Officer within 24 hours, and provide a written report documenting the situation and all factual information and allegations

The Executive Officer will:

- Notify DeMolay International and the Advisory Council or Sponsoring Body, as appropriate
- Place the alleged perpetrator, if they are a DeMolay advisor or adult volunteer, on leave from DeMolay programs and activities pending the completion of an investigation
- Notify the appropriate insurance provider

All reported suspicions and incidents will be reviewed by DeMolay to determine whether further action needs to be taken, whether current policies and procedures need to be revised to prevent similar future occurrences, and whether additional training or learning opportunities could prevent or reduce the likelihood of similar incidents in the future.

3. *Additional Resources*

In some instances, DeMolay advisors or adult volunteers may hesitate to make a report because they feel that they lack sufficient information, or they do not fully understand the situation. It is important to remember that making a report only requires suspicion, and not proof. For guidance about making a report and what to expect, DeMolay advisors and adult volunteers may choose to reach out to an external hotline for confidential guidance, such as the *Childhelp* hotline at (800) 422-4453.