

YOUTH ACTIVITY SAFETY GUIDELINES

Overview

The Educational Theatre Association, their Chapters and Troupes together with the International Thespian Society (referred to herein as “EdTA”) have a strong interest in protecting the safety of our youth and adult members while being associated with and involved in any activity sponsored by, supported by or being presented by EdTA or any of its group affiliates, Chapters and Troupes, in order to foster a safe, educational and enjoyable experience for all members and participants.

This document provides guidelines for activities sponsored by EdTA and for activities sponsored by Chapters and Troupes at various venues both on and off school campuses. Except as noted herein, EdTA may, on their own, adopt policies that are stricter or adopt specific policies provided by sponsoring school districts other than the policies listed in this document.

Definitions

Youth Activity—Any learning environment, activity, clinic, meeting, festival, camp or conference sponsored by, or provided by, EdTA that includes close interactions with youths, with or without parental supervision/oversight. This includes staying overnight for sanctioned activities.

Youth Activity Director—The person responsible for the oversight, direction and control of the Youth Activity. This may be a staff member, volunteer or a member of the leadership team of a Chapter, or a Troupe.

Staff—A person who is a direct employee of any EdTA entity involved with planning, directing and/or supervising Youth Activity programs and staff.

Activity Worker—Includes but is not limited to volunteers, presenters, directors, coaches, consultants, staff, faculty, counselors, chaperones, officials, judges, and teachers, and any other adults and students acting as supervisors/mentors/workers in a paid, unpaid or volunteer status, as part of a Youth Activity.

Youth—Any person under the age of 19, member, participant or attendee, participating in a Youth Activity.

Guidelines for Youth Activity Directors and Sponsoring Organization Requirements for Holding Youth Activities at EdTA

All Youth Activity Directors managing activities sponsored by EdTA, its Chapters and Troupes, are responsible for the safety of the workers, volunteers and participants for the duration of the Youth Activity. They are responsible for the behavior of the Activity Workers. Youth Activity Directors acting on behalf of EdTA for Youth Activities should meet the following requirements:

1. All Youth Activity should meet the minimum guidelines as described by EdTA and the minimum guidelines and requirements set forth by their school district.
2. All Youth Activities held by EdTA should comply with these *Youth Activity Safety Guidelines*.
3. All Youth Activities must comply with EdTA policies regarding weapons, drug and alcohol, bullying policies, and the reporting of child abuse and neglect.
4. It is recommended that all Activity Contracts be forwarded to EdTA’s designated party for review prior to execution.
5. It is recommended that the Activity Director ensure all Activity Workers have received a copy (electronic or paper) of the *Youth Activity Safety Guidelines*.
6. It is recommended that Activity Workers, volunteers and Activity Support Staff successfully pass a Sex Offender Registry Check for the state(s) in which they currently reside. No Activity Worker

or Activity Support Staff should be listed on any Sex Offender Registry. Sex Offender Registry Checks should be conducted at least annually. One resource for such checks is:

The National Sex Offender Public website: <http://www.nsopw.gov/core/Portal.aspx>

There are third party vendors who provide similar search services; EdTA can recommend several vendors. There are benefits to a third party provider to conducting these searches.

7. It is recommended that all Youth Activities have, or arrange for, access to individuals that are certified in Adult & Youth CPR and First Aid within reasonable proximity to the Youth Activity. In the case of an emergency or accident involving youth, Parents/Guardians should be notified, following notification of the appropriate emergency personnel.

Guidelines for Activity Worker and Activity Support Staff Eligibility

As these guidelines indicate, EdTA is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for youth and adult members, staff and volunteers. Accordingly, it is recommended that Chapter and Troupe leadership hosting a Youth Activity ensure that an Activity Worker does not have a criminal background that would disqualify the individual from participating in the Youth Activity. Options to determine this information may include a question on an activity application or a criminal history background check through local, state or federal law enforcement agency resources.

It is expected that all Chapters and Troupes will comply with the guidance provided by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding consideration of conviction records in hiring. Generally, the following convictions will render an Activity Worker ineligible to participate in Youth Activities:

- a. Any sexual offense;
- b. Felony assault, including domestic violence related incidents;
- c. Child abuse, molestation or other crime involving endangerment of a minor;
- d. Murder; or
- e. Kidnapping.

Other convictions, such as misdemeanor assault, drug distribution activity, felony drug possession, and any other felony or crime involving moral turpitude, may also render an Activity Worker ineligible to participate in Youth Activities.

Guidelines for Vehicle Travel

1. It is recommended that any Activity Worker employed by EdTA who will be responsible for transporting youth by vehicle should undergo and pass a Driving Record Check. One might utilize a resource such as [this](https://www.dmv.us.org/land.php?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=DMV.us.org&utm_term=driving%20record%20check&utm_content=driving%20record%20check) to conduct a driving records check (for \$1.00 per report: https://www.dmv.us.org/land.php?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=DMV.us.org&utm_term=driving%20record%20check&utm_content=driving%20record%20check)
2. Non-EdTA Activity Workers who transport youth must have a valid driver's license and be approved by the Activity Director to transport youth.
3. Activity Workers should avoid any one-on-one transportation of youth.
4. If one-on-one travel will occur, the Activity Worker is encouraged to contact event coordinator or designee immediately before departure and immediately upon arrival at the destination.

Guidelines for Activity Worker/Youth Interaction

1. A ratio of at least one adult supervisor to every 20 youth is recommended, with a minimum of two adult supervisors regardless of size of activity. At least one adult supervisor of the same sex as the youth should be required. It is encouraged that when youth are present no less than two adults are present. The goal is to avoid any situations where only one adult or one youth are together. Two or more youth and one adult is acceptable.
2. When in bathrooms or locker rooms, Activity Workers must be the same gender as the youth.

Activity Workers showering or bathing with youths is strictly prohibited under all circumstances. Activity Workers will not be in the shower or bath areas with youth except during extreme medical emergencies.

3. Youths will not be unsupervised in the residence facility at night during overnight stays.
4. Taking pictures of youth or posting pictures or information about youth to social media sites without parent/guardian permission is prohibited.
5. Use of an Activity Worker's personal room, office or home for interacting/meeting alone with youth that are affiliated with the Youth Activity is prohibited. Activity Workers are prohibited from meeting youth off-site or off hours. Exceptions require parent/guardian advance written approval.
6. All Activity Workers are expected to exercise appropriate supervision of youth. Oversight may vary based on the activity, the age of participants, the location of the event, etc.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

The illegal possession, use, or distribution of drugs or alcohol by members, volunteers and employees is a violation of EdTA policies as well as State and Federal laws. EdTA supports these laws and practices as a “zero tolerance” policy while supporting and cooperating with local, state and federal agencies in the prevention of drug abuse.

In satisfaction of this mandate and in order to fulfill its obligations under the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994, EdTA has formulated standards of conduct for both its employees and its Youth members which prohibit the following acts:

1. Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, or sale of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia on EdTA premises both temporary and permanent or while on EdTA business or at EdTA activities, or in EdTA supplied vehicles either during or after working hours;
2. Unauthorized use or possession or manufacture, distribution, or sale of a controlled substance as defined by the Federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. §§ 801 et seq., on any EdTA premises, or while engaged in EdTA business or attending EdTA activities or in EdTA supplied vehicles, either during or after working hours;
3. Unauthorized use, manufacture, distribution, possession, or sale of alcohol on EdTA managed premises or while on EdTA business or at EdTA activities, in EdTA supplied vehicles, either during or after working hours;
4. Storing in a locker, desk, vehicle, or other place on EdTA owned or occupied premises any unauthorized controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol;
5. Use of alcohol off EdTA managed premises that adversely affects an employee's or student's work or academic performance, or an employee's or student's safety or the safety of others;
6. Possession, use, manufacture, distribution or sale of illegal drugs off EdTA managed premises that adversely affects the employee's work performance or the student's academic performance, or an employee's or student's safety or the safety of others;
7. Violation of State or Federal laws relating to the unauthorized use, possession, manufacture, distribution, or sale of alcohol, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia;
8. In the case of employees, failure to notify an employee's supervisor of an employee's arrest or conviction under any criminal drug statute as a result of a violation of law which occurs at the workplace.

Guidelines for Anti-Bullying

EdTA is committed to creating a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all Youth members, adult, staff and volunteers. Bullying of any students, members, staff, adults, or volunteers occurring at

any EdTA premises or events is strictly prohibited and should not be tolerated.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of aggressive, intentional or deliberately hostile behavior that occurs repeatedly and over time. Bullying behaviors normally fall into three categories, physical, emotional, and verbal, and may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks; gestures, or actions; rumors; false accusations; hazing, social isolation, and cyber-bullying.

EdTA encourages all members, staff and parents who become aware of an act of bullying to immediately report the incident(s) to the Youth Activity Director on site. Any person who retaliates against another for reporting bullying should also be subject to consequences.

Intervention/Consequences

Reports of bullying are taken seriously and should be dealt with quickly and effectively. If a member, attendee, or any adult is found guilty of bullying behavior the consequences should depend on both the results of the investigation and the severity of the incident. Consequences may include but are not limited to mediation, a parent conference, counseling, suspension, expulsion, or referral to local law enforcement agency.

Reporting Requirements for Child Abuse and Neglect, Including Sexual Assault

EdTA requires any person who suspects or is aware of any child abuse or neglect, including sexual assault, to report such abuse, neglect, or assault to law enforcement or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Law enforcement is likewise required to notify DHHS of any such incidents reported to them.

All Activity Directors and Activity Workers are required to notify the local police department immediately when these situations are suspected.

NOTICE TO ALL ACTIVITY DIRECTORS, ACTIVITY WORKERS:

If you suspect any child abuse or neglect, including sexual assault:

1. You must report it,
2. You should give as much information about the circumstances as possible
3. You are immune from liability from any civil or criminal liability if you have reported the information in good faith, and
4. If you know of child abuse, neglect, or sexual assault but are not reporting it, you are breaking the law.

Child abuse or neglect means knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

1. Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health;
2. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
3. Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
4. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
5. Sexually abused; or
6. Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions;

Questions regarding these guidelines and policies can be addressed to the Diane Carr, Director of Chapters & Communities at 513.703.9349, email dcarr@schooltheatre.org.