

**Requirements, Recommendations, & Areas for Discernment: Youth Ministry
Episcopal Diocese of NC
9/9/21**

Allow for 42 square feet of space per individual when determining your maximum enrollment for indoor and outdoor activities through Stage 3. Youth and adult leaders may gather in spaces that allow for 6 feet of distance per individual.

These guidelines and recommendations have been prepared by a team of diocesan clergy, staff, and lay leaders. Our highest value is to protect the wellbeing of our youth, students, faculty and their households. As we all realize, however, wellbeing, safety and risk are large concepts and definitions may vary from situation to situation.

Though a variety of perspectives and situations were part of this collaboration, we know there is no one size fits all when it comes to your discernment about when and how to reopen places of learning for youth and teenagers. While setting some essential parameters, these guidelines and recommendations give you and your local community room to make some of your own determinations for your own location.

Facilities and Personnel

Required	Recommended	For Discernment
Allow 36- 42 sq ft of space for each individual in a classroom. This is the same as before the pandemic.	Until all youth are vaccinated, maintain classroom cohorts. It is highly recommended that all adults who work with youth be fully vaccinated.	Congregations may choose to continue to limit parent access to classrooms.

Cloth Face Coverings (CFC)

Required	Recommended	For Discernment
CFCs must be worn by all unvaccinated youth and adults. Indoors, CFCs must be worn by all youth and adults, irrespective of vaccination status.	It is recommended that youth and adults wear CFCs when outdoors and unable to socially distance.	Congregations may consider vaccinated youth to be unmasked outdoors, continuing to be socially distanced..

Daily Arrival and Departure Procedures/Daily Health Screenings

Required	Recommended	For Discernment
<p>Participants, staff, and all volunteers should all monitor themselves and not participate if they have any signs and/or symptoms of Covid-19.</p> <p>Keep a listing of those who attend programs and events.</p>		

Preventing Spread in the Classroom

Required	Recommended	For Discernment
<p>Youth who show symptoms of COVID-19 while at church should be isolated in a designated area. A parent/guardian must pick up the young person ASAP.</p> <p>Check ventilation systems to ensure that air conditioning systems work, with clean filters.</p> <p>All high touch areas, i.e. door handles, etc., must be frequently sanitized.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be available at entrances and exits and frequently utilized by youth and adults.</p> <p>Food servers must wear a CFC and gloves. If food is served it should only be served by masked individuals, and distancing must be maintained during consumption. (only beginning in Stage 3).</p>	<p>Use floor markers and other methods to encourage physical distancing in the classroom and shared spaces.</p> <p>Limit the use of materials shared between participants.</p> <p>Singing activities: When outdoors, maintain 6 ft of distance between youth. For indoor singing, maintain a distance of 10 ft. Youth should remain masked. Refer to the Diocese of NC Guidelines for Corporate Singing for details on guidelines for choral groups (i.e. prolonged vocal rehearsals or group singing situations.)</p> <p>Install a 4-inch to 6-inch thick HEPA filter with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating of 11 to 13, as sufficient to improve air quality without impeding airflow through a non-HEPA system.</p>	<p>Open windows/doors if possible and when not dangerous for youth.</p> <p>It is left up to local discernment if pre-registration for events and programs will be required, but a list of attendees still must be kept (see required column).</p>

Recommendations for Stage 3:

- We leave to local discernment the holding of overnight youth programs and events. If an overnight event is held, all protocols must be followed, including allowing for physical distancing of those while sleeping.
- Rooming will be assigned such that anyone who has not been vaccinated will be in a room to themselves, in a room with a sibling, or in a room with someone they already share close contact with in their daily life.
- All pastoral visits assume that neither the visitor nor the clergy person has any symptoms of COVID-19 and should take place outside.
- It is recommended that hybrid youth gatherings continue to be offered as an additional way youth ministries meet.
- Pastoral care conversations via telephone and video call are also encouraged. All guidelines concerning confidentiality apply to these conversations as they would to in-person conversations.

Gathering Guidelines:

- A listing of all participants should be kept in the event that contact tracing is required.
- Singing is allowed per the guidelines in the [Updated Music Guidelines](#).
- Cough/sneeze into the elbow (when wearing long sleeves) or into the shirt (when wearing short sleeves), or cover with tissue. DO NOT sneeze into your hand!
- Put necessary documentation in place: signage in the building, contact tracing measures, such as sign-in sheets, and update all necessary contact information for young people and volunteers.
- Have all needed supplies for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and spaces. Have adequate PPE and sanitizer.

[Safe Church Best Practices](#)

[Safe Church During Covid](#)

[Additional Information regarding Diocesan Youth Events](#)