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# Louisiana Youth Tour Policies and Procedures

## Delegates

Congratulations! You have been selected because you have exhibited leadership qualities. The Louisiana Youth Tour takes pride in taking the best of the best to Washington, D.C. each year in June. We hope you are honored to be a part of this opportunity. Your local electric cooperative is sponsoring you to attend this trip. This is an all-expense paid trip provided by your local electric cooperative and The Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives (ALEC). Below are guidelines and expectations that you must adhere to because you are representing the state of Louisiana, your local electric cooperative, and community. These guidelines are in place to ensure your safety as well as the safety of others. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in you being sent home at your parents' expense.

Tour groups typically attract a lot of attention. There are a few things which are innocent enough when you are with your family or in a small group that are completely unacceptable when multiplied by visiting students.

### Be Mindful of Time

- ✓ We must be on time for our appointments. Make every effort not to be the one that makes us late. Washington, D.C. is a large city with lots of commuters; if we do not leave on time, then this can make us late for all our appointments. It is important that we respect everyone's time and schedule.
- ✓ Respect the curfew hours that are set. This means be in your room! Curfew is set for your own good. Once your room is checked don't open the door for anyone unless it is one of your chaperones. If someone other than your chaperone knocks on your door, call your chaperone and do not open the door. There will be security guards on every floor.
- ✓ The curfew is set to provide you with time to rest your body. These will be long days with lots of walking in many different weather conditions. You will not be allowed to rest during the day, so take advantage of the curfew hours to get your much-needed rest.
- ✓ During room checks at night, your chaperone will give you a wake-up time. Be sure to set your alarm. Each morning a chaperone will send out a group text to make sure that everyone is awake and getting ready for the day. Please respond to your chaperone otherwise a chaperone will be sent to your room to make sure you are awake and getting ready to go.

## Safety and Security

- ✓ Do not lay your purse, wallet, cell phone, or camera down and expect it to be there when you return. Carry your money in such a place or fashion that it can't be lost or stolen. Keep purses close to your body and wallets in your front pocket.
- ✓ Never go anywhere by yourself. There should always be at least three (3) in a group. Don't under any circumstances, leave the group without first checking with a chaperone. Always walk purposefully with a group, be aware of your surroundings, and look like you know where you are going even if you don't. Do not walk and text.
- ✓ If you have any security problems, please call one of the chaperones immediately.
- ✓ While you are in D.C., you will meet up with many homeless people and others asking for donations. Do not take pictures or engage with them.
- ✓ You will probably see lots of protesters or interest groups while touring. Do not antagonize these groups, make fun of them, or provoke them. It is best that you find a chaperone immediately and remove your group from that location.
- ✓ You are not allowed to order room service or have food delivered to the hotel.
- ✓ You are also not allowed to go to any vending machines once room check has been completed.
- ✓ During room checks, the chaperone must see your face.
- ✓ The Youth Tour is an opportunity for delegates to develop their leadership skills, meet new people and learn about their government. To foster leadership experience, parents and relatives are not allowed to travel with delegates.
- ✓ The purpose of the trip is, also, to network and meet new friends. To preserve this experience and for the safety of our delegates, meeting up with friends and relatives in Washington, DC that are not part of the Youth Tour group is not allowed.

## Hotel Rules

- ✓ Delegates will stay in hotel rooms with 1-2 other delegates of the same sex.
- ✓ Please be advised that room assignments will be made by the Youth Tour Director in coordination with our national association. Once room assignments are finalized and sent out to delegates and their parents, changes are not allowed. It is important to understand that Louisiana is only a small portion of the 2000+ students to whom our association assigns accommodation. Safety and making sure students are where they are assigned to be is our top priority. Our association guarantees that each delegate will have their own bed, sofa, or roll-away bed. No one is allowed to share beds. This leadership trip encourages personal growth and stepping out of your comfort zone. As such, requests for room changes based on backgrounds, cultures, or differing opinions or beliefs will not be accommodated.
- ✓ Any damaged property in your room when you arrive at the hotel should be reported immediately to the chaperones. They will report it to the hotel manager.
- ✓ Everyone will want to bring souvenirs home, but not from the hotel rooms. In other words, do not take the pillows, towels, etc. from the hotel.
- ✓ The phones in your rooms will be turned off which means you will be able to use your phone to call room-to-room with the hotel only.

- ✓ When checking out of the hotel, check your room to make sure you or your roommates have not left anything behind. Check behind doors, drawers and outlets. Once we are gone, we cannot return for any items that were left behind.
- ✓ Do not play on the elevators; press all the buttons or jump. Remember the elevators have a lot of people to transport so let's be safe and courteous.

### Dress Code

- ✓ Articles of clothing should not contain any obscene logos, political statements, rude or provocative comments, drugs or alcohol images or logos.
- ✓ Your chaperones will provide you with a shirt or dress code for each day. Those instructions should be followed.
- ✓ No tight, low cut, or very short clothing.
- ✓ You should always wear protective comfortable shoes. No open-toed shoes are permitted during touring. You will have to do plenty of walking even if you have blisters. It is recommended you get a good pair of tennis shoes and break them in before the trip.
- ✓ Dress to impress. You are representing your home cooperative and our state.

### Electronic Devices

- ✓ Should only be used during appropriate times.
- ✓ Devices should be out of sight while chaperones are giving instructions, during elected official visits, meals, touring, and presentations.
- ✓ Personal calls or text messages should only be made or received in your room at night not while we are touring, so be sure to let your loved ones know when you will be available to talk or text.
- ✓ Don't let your phone become such a distraction that you miss out on connecting with your fellow delegates and seeing all the wonderful things Washington, D.C. has to offer.

### Social Media

Social media sites, such as Facebook, X, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Tik Tok, personal texting, and others, are powerful tools of communication that can have significant impact on your personal reputation as well as the reputation of the cooperative you are representing, the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives (ALEC) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Your parent/guardian should be reviewing these guidelines with you, but it is especially important that you both discuss this section. You must read and acknowledge personal responsibility to use social media responsibly as a cooperative representative, and a representative of ALEC on the NRECA Youth Tour. Please adhere to the following rules and guidelines when posting on social media sites while on Louisiana Youth Tour or thereafter concerning the NRECA/Louisiana Youth Tour.

- ✓ Think twice before posting. Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Even if you think the information will disappear after a few hours, an image, with your name attached, can last a lifetime. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on your reputation, the reputation of your family and friends, the reputation of your cooperative, ALEC and NRECA. Moreover, the information you

place online could jeopardize your future when applying to college or for a job for years after Louisiana Youth Tour.

- ✓ Always be authentic. Be honest about your identity. If you post personally or use a Youth Tour hashtag, make sure you are a positive representative of your cooperative, ALEC and the NRECA Youth Tour.
- ✓ When posting on social media while on the Louisiana Youth Tour, you will not be disrespectful, disingenuous, inappropriate or offensive.
- ✓ Never pretend to be someone else when you post personally or as a Youth Tour representative
- ✓ Be respectful and thoughtful. Louisiana Youth Tour participants are committed to showing respect and dignity for all people and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of opposing ideas. Treat others the way you would like them to treat you on social media sites.
- ✓ Know the rules. Become familiar with the terms of service and policies of the social media sites and networks in which you participate, and the appropriate code of ethics required for responsible online communications.
- ✓ If you have a question about something you want to post, please ask a chaperone or the ALEC Youth Tour Director. Delegates who engage in inappropriate use of social media sites, including electronic text, may be required to remove all posts in question from social media sites, be required to show tour leaders their social media sites when asked or be sent home at the expense of their parent(s), or be subject to any other actions that may be appropriate or required based on the circumstances.
- ✓ These guidelines and rules are non-negotiable, and the consequences are dependent on the degree of misuse of social media.

*You will be required to pose for photos for social media and print publications. If there is a reason you can or should not be in those photos, please let the ALEC Youth Tour Director know before you leave for the trip.*

## Be Respectful

- ✓ Please respect your chaperones' wishes at all times. Help them to enjoy themselves and make things easy for everyone on the trip. The chaperones are there for you, so please come to them with any issue large or small you may have during the trip.
- ✓ Be courteous to your roommates. You should respect each other's opinions, beliefs, upbringing/backgrounds and privacy/personal space. Keep your room as clean as possible, so your items do not get mixed up.
- ✓ Be respectful during Elected Officials visits. There will be no phone usage or sleeping during the meetings. Respect the office and position even if you don't agree with his/her politics.
- ✓ Always use your manners.
- ✓ Respect public property. No stealing, destroying or applying graffiti to other's property. Failure to respect public property will result in being sent home at your parent's expense.

## Special Needs and Physical Requirements

If a delegate has any special needs or physical requirements, please contact the ALEC Youth Tour Director immediately. The tour has several physical demands. Delegates must be able to handle the following conditions:

- ✓ Able to walk an average of 10-20 miles a day
- ✓ Able to be in extreme weather conditions including heat and rain
- ✓ Able to endure long days
- ✓ Able to tolerate large crowds and long lines
- ✓ Able to be in enclosed spaces like elevators and subways
- ✓ Able to eat in food courts and fast-food restaurants
- ✓ Able to room with 1-2 other delegates of the same sex
- ✓ Able to use mobile apps for communication purposes
- ✓ Flexible to changes in plans/itineraries

## Transportation Procedures

Delegates will not be allowed to travel alone. Chaperones will be strategically placed with the delegates to ensure safe and efficient travel. Delegates will be broken up into Travel Pods. Each chaperone is assigned a Travel Pod.

### Uber/Lyft/Tour Bus

No delegate should be in a “for hire” vehicle without a chaperone or should be left to wait for another ride without a chaperone. Groups will be broken up into travel pods when taking small “for hire” vehicles. The chaperone should make sure that everyone is present in the car before leaving the pickup location.

### Metro (TBD per year)

We will travel on the Metro as a group; however, the larger group will be broken into travel pods for more efficient travel purposes. Each chaperone is responsible for getting their travel pod on and off the metro at the proper locations. Because we will be traveling during peak commute times, we may not all fit in the same car as a larger group, but your entire travel pod should be in the same car with you. The metro moves very quickly. You will only have 10 seconds to board and get off the train. Do not take out any items such as phones or wallets that can be left on the train. Be prepared to move fast. Know where you are going, what line you should be on, and how many stops until you get off the train (Reference your guidebook provided for this information).

### Rentals

Under no circumstance are delegates and chaperones allowed to rent any scooters, bikes or paddle boats.

### Alcoholic Beverage/Drugs/Smoking

Delegates are not allowed to purchase, bring, or use alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or vaping on the Louisiana Youth Tour (E.g. cigarettes, zyn pouches, vape pens, chewing tobacco, and dipping snuff).

Possession of or the taking of drugs including marijuana is illegal and will not be tolerated.

List all prescribed medication for allergies or special medical problems on your medical form. It is the student's responsibility to administer the prescribed dosage.

No delegate is allowed to purchase or bring any type of energy drink, pre-workout or mixing powder. If a delegate is seen with an energy drink, chaperones will ask them to throw it away.

Coffee and soda are allowed during appropriate times.

**Golden Rule: Have fun and make lots of memories!**