



STEM Flights YOUTH POLICY

Purpose

STEM Flights is committed to protecting youth who are involved in our many activities, and in STEM Flights programs and events that are operated by others. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which youth can participate and learn about aircraft and aviation. The Primary goals for this Youth Protection Policy are:

- To inspire and grow a passion for aviation among young people.
- To assure the safety of young participants in STEM Flights related programs and events.
- To earn and sustain the confidence of parents, guardians, and families whose children participate in STEM Flights programs and activities.
- To provide training to inspire wise choices and appropriate care in program design and delivery for the protection of youth, staff and volunteers.

The term “youth” when used in this Policy means any person under age 18.

Basic Requirements

STEM Flights Youth Policy include two steps, which are described under STEM Flights Youth Policy below. These are *Training*, and *Criminal History Background Checks*.

- **Effective Date.** This policy is effective as of January 1, 2020, and it will be mandatory as all STEM Flights Pilot Mentors.
- **Required.** If you are an approved STEM Flights Pilot Mentor you must complete both Training and a Criminal History Background Check (*U.S. residents only**), with acceptable results in STEM Flights judgment, before you may work with youth in the STEM Flights program, even if you have previously participated in services to youth.
 - STEM Flights staff who are involved with youth activities are subject to the same requirements as other STEM Flights Pilot Mentors and volunteers.

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- **Criminal History Background Check.** This is a confidential criminal history background check, and it requires acceptable results in STEM Flights judgment. Certain results –listed under **Disqualifying Criteria** below – will automatically disqualify you from working with youth. We may only proceed with a background check if you give us permission through a release.
- **Disqualifying Criteria.** You will automatically be ineligible to volunteer in the STEM Flights program if you:
 - Fail to complete the screening process, or provide information required to conduct a criminal history background check, or provide that information in a timely fashion if we ask you to do so.
 - Are or ever have been a Registered Sex Offender in any jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or date of the offense.
 - Have been convicted of any felony involving force or threat of force against a person, regardless of the date of conviction.
 - Have been convicted of any crime characterized as a “sex offense” including, but not limited to, child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, or possession or distribution of illegal pornography, regardless of the date of conviction.
 - Have been convicted of any crime involving cruelty to animals, regardless of the date of conviction.
 - Have been convicted of any crime involving contributing to the delinquency of a minor, regardless of the date of conviction.
 - Have been convicted of any crime involving controlled substances, within the previous five (5) years.
 - Were previously terminated from a paid or volunteer position because of misconduct with a youth.
 - Are under pending charges, incarceration, or allegations by law enforcement officials in any jurisdiction involving a sex offense as described above, force or threat of force against a person, cruelty to animals, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, controlled substances, or misconduct with a youth. The period of ineligibility will end if and when the relevant charges, incarceration or allegations are dropped or otherwise terminated by said law enforcement officials without a conviction.

Supervision

We believe that effective supervision is a key to maintaining the highest youth safety standards in the STEM Flights program. Our supervision requirements in this program are designed specifically to protect youth, staff and volunteers.

Contact with Youth

We expect that you, as a volunteer or STEM Flights employee, will have positive relationships with the youth you are paired with. However, in order to maximize youth safety, we must require the following common-sense restrictions in order to ensure that both the youth and you are protected outside of a STEM Flights experience.

- **Outside Activities.** Do not initiate meetings or interactions with any student, or extend your relationship to other activities .
- **Communications.** Do not communicate directly with any STEM Flights Student. Limit communication to sharing program information through the following:
 - Telephone calls or texts to the parent's telephone (not the youth's mobile phone);
 - E-mails addressed to both the youth and his or her parents; and
 - Written information sent to the parents' home.

Prohibited Activities. In the STEM Flights program:

- **Physical Force and Abuse.** For obvious reasons, the following are strictly prohibited:
 - **Physical force or violence** – Slapping, spanking, hitting, shoving, corporal punishment and similar behaviors, by staff or volunteers or by other youth.
 - **Sexual communication or contact** – Dating or other private contacts; discussing sexual subjects of any kind; and touching in an area typically covered by a bathing suit, by yourself or by other youth; any touching that might cause the youth to feel uncomfortable.
 - **Neglect.** Punishing a youth by withholding food, water, medical assistance, or other needs.
 - **Bullying.** Intentionally harmful behavior directed toward a specific youth or group of youths with the intent or effect of intimidating, causing emotional or psychological harm, or causing isolation or humiliation, by staff, volunteers, or other youth.

Activities Requiring Special Consideration or Approval

- **Physical Contact.** We very strongly discourage demonstrations of affection and physical contact. These should only be given on rare occasions when clearly required to meet a youth's specific needs, never to meet your needs or desires. Limit any touching to handshakes and brief cross-shoulder hugs, and never touch a youth in areas that are typically covered by a bathing suit. In some situations, you may need to assist the STEM Flights such as by helping him or her climb into an airplane, or assisting with buckling his or her seatbelt. If possible, encourage the parent to be present and acknowledge that the touching might occur.
- **Photography.** Parents are given the option to sign a photo release as a part the STEM Flights Liability waiver. This allows us to use photos of the student or flight experience for marketing and promotional purposes. Never use the students name when adding photos to any digital media. If the parent declines to sign the photo portion of the liability waiver, do not take any photos of the student. Signed waivers should be submitted to STEM Flights for processing.

Discipline

In order to maximize the safety and well-being of participants in the STEM Flights program, all youth must exhibit proper behavior and self-control toward the environment, equipment and other participants. Misbehavior includes such conduct as fighting, yelling, verbal abuse, physical violence, disrespectful behavior, foul language, unsportsmanlike conduct, lying, endangering oneself or another, stealing, and disobeying STEM Flights Pilot Mentors. In situations where a youth has acted inappropriately, depending on severity, the Pilot Mentor may refuse to offer a flight experience and report the incident to STEM Flights.

Never use physical force on a youth except to temporarily restrain for his or her safety or the safety of surrounding people. In such a case, give prompt notice to STEM Flights and to the parents of the youth involved. We will review all reported suspicions, incidents or suspected rule infractions, even if deemed to be minor, to determine whether further action is needed, and whether we must revise current policies and procedures to prevent similar future occurrences.