

Guidelines for Young People Working with Minors

A. Establishing Appropriate Conduct with Minors

1. No one is to be alone with a child. It is best to have two or more volunteers (an adult with a teen) together when you are with children. If you must be alone with a child on a particular occasion, be sure to be in a “public” place where you can be seen (through a window or on a playground) or when an adult may walk in at any time. This keeps you and the minors you are working with much safer.
2. We speak to children and adults and each other with respect. We are not harsh or threatening. We do not need to shame or humiliate anyone. We do not use profane language. We do not use physical discipline or any sort of hitting or slapping or spanking. If a child is uncontrollable, hurry for adult help and practice safety measures decided upon by your volunteer site.
3. We do not use or supply alcohol or other legal or illegal drugs. (Sacramental Wine at Mass is the ONLY exception.) If medication we are taking with doctor’s orders makes us drowsy or unable to work with our project, explain it to your supervisor and work with the children another time.
4. We do not have or show anything resembling pornography with our children by any means: printed materials, videos, clothing, dirty jokes, etc. Sexually oriented or morally inappropriate websites and the like are not viewed, sent or received using church equipment or on church property.
5. We do NOT talk about sexual matters with children in our care as a church volunteer. We are not there to share personal life stories with these children, but to mentor or serve them and keep them safe. Questions or topics that come up are to be referred to the adult teacher you are volunteering with or your volunteer supervisor. Children would be encouraged to discuss these issues with their parents or guardian.

B. Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

1. Touching is a “touchy” issue. Here are some guidelines:
 - a. Never touch a child inappropriately e.g., tickling, hugging, etc.
 - b. Sideways hugs, handshakes, in-public hugs are always better.
 - c. Use caution and the buddy-system when helping little children in the bathroom, letting them do as much as they can by themselves.
 - d. Unless you are changing a diaper, (and even then, be respectful) don't touch anywhere that can be covered up with a bathing suit, and always with an adult present.
2. At an overnight trip or other retreat-type situations it is one person per bed (even if nightmares or thunderstorms occur). At least TWO adults are present at all times.

C. Electronic Communications

1. When using Facebook and other social networking sites, do not “friend” the students or minors with whom you assist.
2. If you need to communicate information to one of the children you work with, do it in person or speak with their parent. Never email or text them unless using a parish/school established one way communication App, such as flock notes, remind 101 etc.